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A TRANSLATION  
INTO MODERN ENGLISH PROSE



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# BEOWULF

AND

## THE FIGHT AT FINNSBURG

A TRANSLATION  
INTO MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

With an Introduction and Notes

BY

JOHN R. CLARK HALL, M.A., PH.D.

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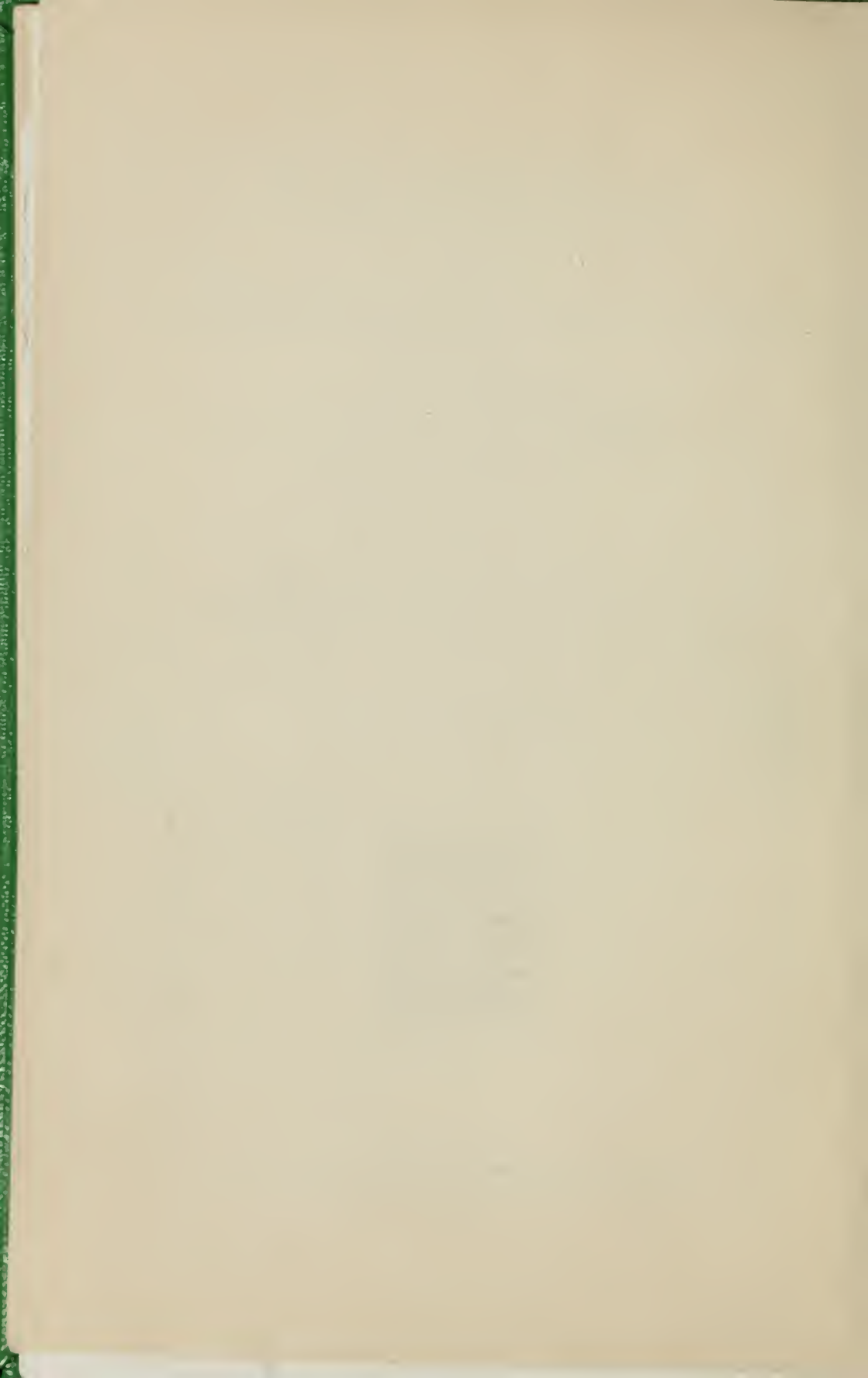
WITH TWELVE ILLUSTRATIONS



LONDON:

SWAN SONNENSCHN AND COMPANY, LIM.

1901.



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## CORRECTIONS

- p. 11 line 30 *insert comma after* Scyldings.  
 21 261 *for* hearth—companions *read* hearth-com-  
     panions.  
 25 349 *for* powers *read* prowess.  
 27 374 „ Hretel „ Hrethel.  
     380 *insert comma after* he.  
     390 *for* brought word within *read* brought out  
     word from within.  
 31 471 *for* seas *read* sea's.  
 35 *italic* } *insert his before* sword.  
     line 2 }  
 61 *insert* albeit *at beginning of first line, before*  
     he might not guide.  
 119 line 2419 *for* Geats *read* Geats'.

The letters N and S on the diagram of the Scandinavian Royal Hall at p. 175 should be transposed.

## INTRODUCTION

THE following pages comprise a short statement of what is actually known with respect to the poem of Beowulf, another statement of what seems to me most likely to be true amongst the almost innumerable matters of conjecture concerning it, and a few words of literary appreciation. Those who wish to know more—especially as regards the numerous theories about the poem—may be referred to that most useful little book, Thomas Arnold's *Notes on Beowulf* (Longmans, London, 1898), and (among works in German) the *Beowulf-Studien* of Gregor Sarrazin with later additions (for which see Bibliography), the collected *Beowulf-Untersuchungen* of Karl Müllenhoff, a scholar whom the student of Beowulf will always respect although he may not be able to follow his conclusions, and the *Untersuchungen* of Professor B. ten Brink. All these appeared in 1888 or 1889.

For reference as regards questions relating to Scandinavian culture, the student will find Professor York Powell's introduction to Elton's translation of *Saxo Grammaticus*, I—IX (Nutt, London, 1894) very helpful to him.

The translation is based on Wyatt's text (Cambridge, University Press, 1894), a text which presents very few divergences from Holder's 1894 text (Freiburg, Mohr), but a good many from Grein's and Heyne-Socin's, which have been used by Garnett and Earle respectively as bases for their translations.

## I.—FACT

**The Manuscript.** The only MS. extant is in the British Museum Library, is bound up with nine others in a parchment codex, and is known as Vitellius A. xv. It was one of those collected in the 17th century by Sir Robert Cotton, who was at much pains to rescue what he could of the literary treasures which the dissolution of the monasteries had cast adrift. His collection was sold in the year 1700, and was deposited for a time in Ashburnham House, Westminster. Here a fire broke out in 1731 and many of the MSS. were lost or burnt or seriously injured, the MS. of Beowulf being much damaged, and charred at the edges. In 1753 the Cottonian collection was transferred to the British Museum, and, although it has been preserved with much care, it is in a far less perfect condition than when the first transcripts of it were made. The handwriting is of the tenth century, and is the work of two copyists, the first writing from line 1 to 'mōste' in line 1939 and the second from that point to the end. Both were unintelligent scribes, the second being inferior to the first. Their differences are brought out in an article in "Modern Language Notes" for Feb. 1890, one of the most marked being a preference of the second scribe for  $\bar{i}o$  instead of  $\bar{e}o$ . Reproductions—about four-fifths of the actual size—of two pages of the MS. are inserted opposite this page, one from the part written by the first scribe and one from that written by the second. An admirable autotype reproduction of the MS. by the late Professor Zupitza has been issued by the Early English Text Society.

**Thorkelin's Transcripts.** In 1786 a Danish scholar named Thorkelin took two copies of the MS.—one with his own hand, and the other by means of a professional

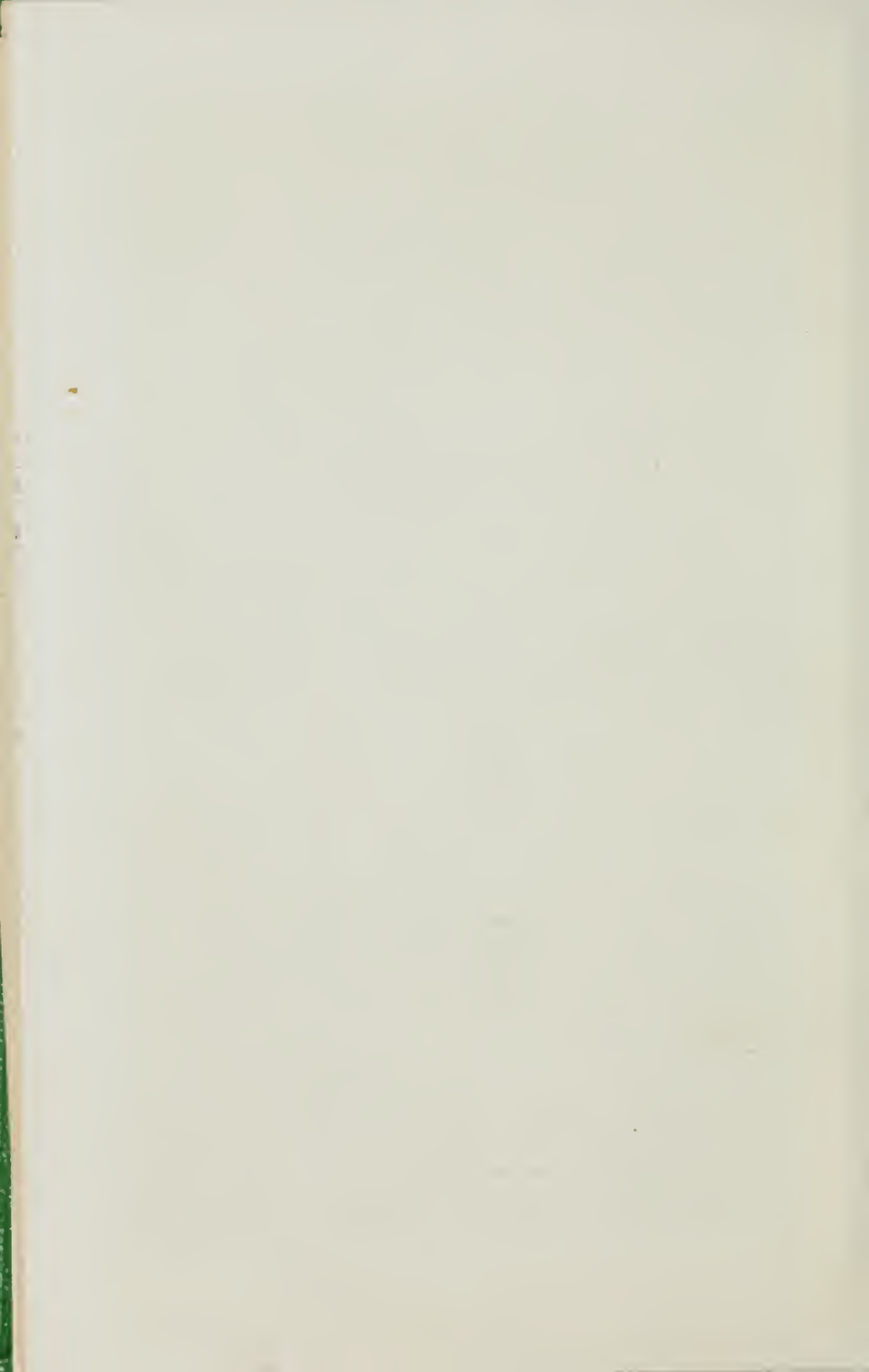




70þlic æt bæn fæloroðes  
 oðr fings færaun. þæt wæs hinc  
 hroþra tommof þara þelard þa  
 man lange beate. þa se dæda  
 ðine life healrode hroþh mo  
 on holmu zehung wyl scipe þæt  
 eadone zened de. miðdo þurme  
 hane mede zehite icða dæf þel  
 þeis pide cuð gnumme gnyne liz  
 gnumd hynde þond þæt une hinc  
 wæs hand zemann. holm hroþra  
 þeoll 7ichæpde becaup. mðam  
 gnaðeles modon. æcnum ægum  
 unsofte þonan fæorh oð þæde  
 nes. ic þæge þagyt. ac me eorlaht  
 æt zesealde madma mænige ma  
 hælþ. dænes.

xxxi  
 Spa se dæd. sernung þæpū lypð  
 Snaalles icða launū þæt lohta  
 hæpde mænnes mede ac heme

eah ær he on beb fage no ic me an  
nefe pas mun hna span talize zup ze  
peorca þon ne zpendel hine for þan ic  
hine speorde spebban nelle aldre beneo  
tan þeah ic eal mæge nat he þara zoda  
þ he me on zean slea þand ze heape þeah  
de he for sie niþ ze peorca acrit on mht  
sculon. seze ofer sittan zif het ze  
se cean deap. þiz ofer pæpen zif þan þiz  
zod on þa hpa fere hond haliz dnyhten ma  
do. deme þa him ze met þince. hylde  
hine þa hea þo deop hleop bolsze on  
fenz eopl ef and plizan þhine yimb montz  
snellie scē þine sele reſte ze beah. næmiz  
heora þohze. þ he þanon scolde eft eard  
lupan æfre ze se cean folc of þe færa byrþ  
þar he afeded pæf. ac he hædon zefrunon  
þ he arto fela micles in þan þin sele  
pæl dead for nam demizea leode. ac him  
dnyhten for zeaf. þiz ſpeda ze þiofu.



copyist. These transcripts (quoted in editions of the text of *Beowulf* as A and B, or *a* and *b*) are preserved in Copenhagen, and are valuable on account of having been taken at a time when the MS. was in a better state than it is now. Otherwise they have no critical importance.

**Form.** The poem is in the unrhymed alliterative metre characteristic of Anglo-Saxon poetry. It is divided, in an arbitrary fashion, into an introduction of 52 lines, and forty-two 'Fits.'

**Language.** The language is an early form of the West-Saxon dialect, with occasional Anglian forms and expressions. It is also to be observed that the scansion would sometimes be improved by using an Anglian form, where the actual spelling of the MS. is West Saxon, *e.g.*, *dōan* would be better than *dōn* at lines 1116 and 1534.

An important grammatical feature is the extreme rarity of the definite article, *Beowulf* being comparable in this respect with the short poem of *Widsith*—one of the earliest poetical remains in the Anglo-Saxon language.

**Historical and Geographical Allusions.** No names of towns are given in the poem, and hardly any names of countries—Sweden (*Swēo rīce*), Scandia (*Scedeland*, *Scedenīg*), Friesland, and *Wedermark* are about all. On the other hand, numerous tribes are mentioned, the most noteworthy being the Danes, the Swedes, the Geats, the Franks and the Frisians.

A map to illustrate the geography of the poem is inserted at page xxiii.

The only certain allusions to historical events of which we know from other sources are (1) the murder of Abel by Cain, who is referred to at lines 111 and 1265, (2) the Flood, (ll. 1689—1693) and (3) the raid of Chocilaicus (the Hygelac of the poem) into Friesland where he attacked the Hattuarii (*Hetware* in the poem) and was afterwards defeated and killed by a combination of the Franks and Frisians about A.D. 515. This last allusion, and a reference to the Merovingians at lines 2921, 2922 which goes

to prove that the poem was not written later than the date of the fall of the Merovingian dynasty in A.D. 752, are most important.

**Other Allusions.** There are allusions in other early writings (e.g., in *Widsith*, which is of earlier date than our poem, and in the *Ags. Chronicle* and *Saxo Grammaticus* which are of later) to a considerable number of persons named in *Beowulf*, as to whom no events are anywhere recorded which can be positively affirmed to be historical, and as to some of whom it may be said that in all probability they are mythical. The Index of Proper Names at the end of the book gives references in most of such cases, and it is not necessary to refer further to them here.

It is quite certain, besides this, that we have references in *Beowulf* to legends which we find, generally in other forms than may be assumed from that poem, in the *Nibelungen Lied*, the *Edda*, the *Völsunga Saga*, the *Hrolfs Saga* and the *Grettis Saga*. The relation in which *Beowulf* stands to these as regards the stories which it contains or alludes to is one which it is not within the scope of this work to discuss. The reader who wishes to know more on this point may refer to Arnold's *Notes*, pp. 66—81 and 93—101, and to Sarrazin's *Beowulf-Studien*, pp. 43—67.

**Society.** From the poem of *Beowulf* we learn much about the culture of a period of which we should otherwise know almost nothing. What we learn accords on the whole with what is given, in broad outlines, in the *Germania* of Tacitus, but since his time society had clearly reached a much higher degree of refinement, and indeed it contrasts favourably in some respects with that which is pictured in the (later) Sagas and *Nibelungen Lied*.

It may be observed, in evidence of this, that court etiquette is quite a prominent feature in the first part of the poem (247—251, 290—300, 336—339, 344—347, 360—370, 390—398, 613, 1014, 1319—20, 1794—1798).

The monarchy has become hereditary, and the king,

or chief, seems to have greater power than one would gather from Tacitus. He is at the same time expected to show his preëminence by personal courage (1041—2) and openhanded liberality (352 etc., 1020, 1055, 2995—6). He is the lord of rings (1507, 2345), the gold-friend of men (1171, 1602), and his throne is the gift-stool (168, 2327). He is not only the protector or shield (370, 2381), but the shepherd (610, 2981) and friend (350, 2026) of his people. In other words, the relation between him and his followers is patriarchal rather than feudal. (189—193, 1477—1481, 3182). Hence he must reciprocate their trust (2490—3, 2633—8) and not be arrogant (1760). They may freely tender him advice (366, 7).

The queens, and other noble women, form quite an interesting feature in our poem. The men are fighters,—rough and forceful; it is to the women that refinement and diplomacy belong. Their importance is well shown by the sketches of Wealhtheow, Hygd, Hildeburh and Thrytho. They were the “peace-weavers” (1942) by clever speech (1169—1183, 1214—1231), by fitting gift (1216, 1930, 2018—9) and gracious ministry (620—4, 2021). It was especially for them to know the etiquette of court (613), and one may well suppose their presence at the banquets to have had a softening influence (1014).\*

The king's thanes, or noble followers, were not only his officers in time of war, but his courtiers in time of peace. (Unferth is the orator, Aeschere the counsellor, and Wulfgar the chamberlain, of Hrothgar). They were divided (160 etc.) into veterans (*duguð*) and juniors (*geoguð*), and owed implicit trust and obedience to their chief (2169), from whom they received food and lodging (261), weapons (2633 etc.) and presents, such as horses, jewels, rings (2635), a share of the booty (3126) and sometimes land (2493, 2606, 2995). In one case mention is made of the king (Hygelac) giving his daughter in marriage to one of his nobles as a reward for high military services (2997). Yet—although gifts are highly prized—

\* Not only Wealhtheow, but Freawaru—her unmarried daughter—was present at the first banquet given to Beowulf, and they both bore round the ale-cup to the guests.

the poem rather represents a lofty sense of duty, and desire for fame, as what should mainly move a man to noble deeds (1387—8, 2708—9).

To get a clear idea of the moral standards of the aristocracy, the reader will do well to examine the characters of Beowulf and of Wiglaf, which are treated at some length in the Index of Proper Names.

The more brutal side of the nature of the well-born comes out chiefly in the episodes. Instances are the seizure of Hildeburh by Finn, that of Ongentheow's queen by Haethcyn, the threat of Ongentheow to hang his prisoners of war (2939—2941), and the vengeful butcheries of Thrytho (1931—1940).

It does not appear that Beowulf was a heavy drinker, but we gather from passages in the poem that excessive drinking was a failing of the fighting men in general (180, 531, 1468 and cp. Tacitus, *Germania* xxii). This is a vice which often goes with great physical strength, and which was very prevalent among the Anglo-Saxons in historic times. And yet the nobles of the poem are no mere fighting animals. They have, as we have already seen, advanced to a considerable degree of refinement; witness their courtesy, and the references to their wisdom and discretion (202, 1400, 1724, 3162). Side by side with the sensual delight in drinking and feasting and the very English and sportsmanlike pleasure in horse racing (864, 5) is the intellectual delight in poetry and song,—in the singing of old stories to the music of the harp (866—874, 2105—2114). Poetic art is also exemplified by the dirges in honour of the dead (2460, 3150, 3172).

Christian references abound in Beowulf, and side by side with them, allusions to a state of heathenism. These will be more fully discussed under the head of Conjecture. From line 204 (see also note to that line) we observe that augury was practised.

As for the material conditions of life, they have also improved since the time of Tacitus. Think of Heorot and its surroundings. There is a throne (168), tapestry on the wall (995), gold adornments, iron bars to the door (722), a mead-plain, bowers, a paved way (320).



There is wine at the feasts—not merely ale and mead. There is much reference to the goldsmith's art—men and women wear costly jewelry of cunning workmanship—I suppose that, as in the case of the London hawkers, their bodies were especially their banks (3015—3019), Note too the richness of the treasures given to Beowulf (1020—1024, 1193—1196, 1867, 2142—2166) and of the dragon's hoard (2756—2777). The armour is artistic, the boar images are of gold, and a wealth of rich decoration is expended on the swords.

For those who wish to look further into the culture-history of Beowulf, I have appended to the translation an Index of Things, wherein will be found a complete catalogue of the antiquities of the poem. To this is added a list of the few classical loan-words used by the writer.

**Bibliography.** A bibliography of works and magazine articles on Beowulf will be found amongst the appended matter. Following a suggestion which I have seen somewhere, I have added its "press-mark" to each of the works of which a copy is to be found in the British Museum.

Particular attention is called to the following abbreviations, which have been frequently used:—

- A = Arnold's Notes on Beowulf. [2288 f 2].  
 ES = Englische Studien. [pp. 5044 a b].  
 HA = Herrig's Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen. [pp. 4052 p.].  
 HZ = Haupt's Zeitschrift = earlier parts of ZDA, below.  
 MLN = Modern Language Notes, Baltimore, U.S.A. [pp. 4970 i.].  
 PB = Paul und Braune's Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache. [12962 o.].  
 SB = Stopford Brooke's Hist. of Early English Literature. (Vol. I. is quoted as i. If there is no i, the reference is to the smaller edition of 1898). [2308 f 15].  
 SZ = Sarrazin's Beowulf-Studien, 1888. [011840 f 34].  
 ZDA = Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum. [pp. 4650].  
 ZPH = Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie. [pp. 5043 a f.].

## II.—THE POEM AS LITERATURE

IN regard to all the longer Anglo-Saxon poems which have come down to us, the question arises:—How much of what is good or striking is due to the author and how much to the common genius of the race? Kail, in an article entitled, *Ueber die Parallelstellen in der Angelsächsischen Poesie* (Anglia XII, 21) has collected clear evidence that a set of stock phrases and expressions run through the whole *corpus* of Anglo-Saxon poetry, and that these phrases and expressions are to a noteworthy extent also found in Old Saxon and Old High German Poems (the Heliand, the Hildebrandslied, the Muspilli and the Wessobrunner Prayer). This being so, it is impossible to use similarity of style in this respect in any two given poems as proof that they are by the same author, and it is also impossible—so small is our stock of Anglo-Saxon poetry—to feel certain that any given locution which we only meet with in one poem is characteristic of that poem and not borrowed from the general store. As regards Beowulf, we may say that it contains much of what is common form and possesses few important qualities which are not also to be found in several other Anglo-Saxon poems or fragments of poems, and lastly, that it is not as compared with the best of them of decidedly higher literary merit.

Having laid down these main *dicta*, we will now shortly go over the salient features of the poem. And without attempting to follow any rigid order, we will endeavour generally to distinguish, in the earlier stages of our review, the affinities and contrasts which it presents in relation to other extant Anglo-Saxon poems, and in the later, to bring out its special excellencies.

Of the characteristics which Beowulf shares with other poems, the most clearly marked are those which result

in a great measure from alliteration and metrical form—the staccato style of short sharp shouts (1563—1575 *et passim*), the strong affection for parallels (1906—1910, etc.), the conciseness, the nervous vigour of expression.

Among figures of speech litotes (as at 793—4, 841—2, 1892—3, 2897—8) and metaphors (1610, 2791—2, etc.) are the most common, the latter usually taking the form of the “kenning” or poetical synonym, and not extending beyond a word or two. Simile and allegory are foreign to the genius of Anglo-Saxon poetry;—only five instances of simile are found in *Beowulf* (218, 727, 985, 1571—2, 1608), and—with the doubtful exception of lines 1740 *et seq.*—not one of allegory.

As regards tone, the dignified seriousness of the poem, its loftiness of sentiment (1384—1389, 2890—1, etc.), its tenderness (1875—1880 etc.) and undercurrent of melancholy and of fatalism (455, 2247—2266, etc.), are features freely found elsewhere. So also are its boastful challenges (“gilpcwide,” 677—8, 1490—1, 2937—2941, etc.) and profusion of laudatory titles (350—355, 427—430, 607—610, 1643—6, 2335—1).

Peculiar to *Beowulf* is the stamp of greater age—and greater youth! It is the poem of a nation’s childhood. The emotions are violent,—there seems to be no self-control—witness *Beowulf*’s schoolboy brag, and his reckless and passionate outburst against Unferth, and Hrothgar’s public displays of abject grief. There is, as in Homer, a naive and fresh delight in everything made or used by man “as if the sense of the human initiative were a recent and delicious perception, and the mind were only beginning to become conscious, and to take pride in the consciousness, of the inventive skill of the race” (A. 11). *Beowulf*, when dying, has the treasure he has won spread out before him, as a sick child might have all his toys brought out, to feast his eyes on them.

It is noteworthy, too, that in spite of the general sombreness of hue, there is now and then a recognition that life is in itself an enjoyable and gladsome thing (2097, 2469, 2727, 3020).

The tendency to personify inanimate things,—another

indication of an early stage of culture,—is not confined to Beowulf,\* but is found in it to a marked degree. Not only have the swords names, but they “bite” (2578), they “chant a lay of battle,” (1523); the horn “sings” (1423), the arrow “does its office” (3118). The door of a house is even called its “mouth” (724).

Akin to this is the habit of endowing animals with speech, of which there is a striking instance at lines 3024—3027.

Then again the poem is full of repetitions, explanations and comments, often inserted most inopportunately, as it seems to us, † but of such a character as we might be led to use ourselves in telling a tale to an audience of rather dull children (756—7, 805—8).

There is, besides this, crudity and clumsiness and want of resource in handling the material; the later poems show greater skill in *technique*, especially in the way of linking sentences or thoughts together. The style is disconnected and abrupt; the general tendency is to use coördinate sentences instead of subordinate, and to eschew the use of copulatives (205—216, 1492—5, 1730—3). To mark the sequence of events almost the only device known to the writer is the use of the particle *ðā* (see *e.g.* lines 1501—1540). Then, as in Homer, the demonstrative pronoun (*sē*, *sēo*, *ðæt*) has hardly yet begun to be used as a simple article—a decided mark of age.

The obscurity which one notices so frequently in the poem is partly due to the peculiarities just mentioned, partly to an intense compression of style and partly to the poet telling his story very much as a child would tell it—*i.e.* sometimes attributing an amount of knowledge to his hearers which they had not got (as, for instance, where he evidently assumes that they know whom he is talking

\* The Riddles of Cynewulf afford many charming examples of this practice; but there they are due to the nature of the riddle.

† It is of course possible that these defects are due in a measure to interpolations by later hands. For myself, I think the interpolations are probably much fewer than they are generally represented to be; but in any case they are not of themselves sufficient to explain the faults of style which I have referred to.

about for a long while before he actually mentions Beowulf by name, and that they are well acquainted with incidents which he cursorily refers to), and sometimes imputing a very small allowance of intelligence to them, as we have already seen. Like children, too, he is apt to use the personal pronouns (hē, etc.) in circumstances which leave one in doubt about the person to whom he is referring (1085—1103, 2379—2390). Of intentional obscurity there is none,—the poet says what he means with refreshing straightforwardness,—he is obscure simply because he does not always know how to say it. Here we may note also the entire absence of humour—that is, of conscious humour. Of unconscious humour we have a grim specimen at line 1545, where the sea-monster sits on the hero, and draws her sword.

With all this simplicity, there are here and there indications of deeper thought than one would expect. The contrasts between old and young (Hrothgar and Beowulf; Beowulf and Wiglaf; Ingeld and the old warrior) and between good and bad (Beowulf and Heremod; Wiglaf and the cowards; Thrytho and Hygd) seem decidedly intentional, and are very characteristic of the poem. The strongest example of all,—that of the successful man first rejoicing in his prosperity and then overthrown by his own arrogance (ll. 1700—1780) is indeed considered by Earle to be the central moral of the work, which he looks upon as a poem with a purpose—that of warning some noble youth against the perils of overweening pride while inciting him to deeds of praise. This is too much, I think. The writer—or compiler, if you will—of Beowulf was no Fénelon, sitting down deliberately to write an "*Aventures de Télémaque*," but a simple story-teller, entering with heart and soul into the thrilling tale he had to tell, yet enough of an artist to be more impressed by contrasts than ordinary folk.

Reference has already been made to the tone of sadness which runs through most Anglo-Saxon poems. This sadness is unusually prominent in Beowulf, showing itself especially in mournful retrospects (1886—7, 2113—4) and gloomy forecasts (82—5, 781—2, 1018—9, 1164, 1240—1,

2277, 2323, 2341—4). Attention may be drawn in this connection to the striking richness and variety of the references to death. Between sixty and seventy of these are noteworthy on account of their rising above the plainness of prose, and some of them (*e.g.* ll. 26—7, 1007—8, 1150—1, 2269, 2419—2424) are of remarkable beauty. The more important of the rest—several of which can be paralleled from later poems,—are to be found at lines 55, 264, 636, 822, 1179, 1214, 1275, 1338, 1436, 1550, 1622, 1754—5, 2060—1, 2123, 2252, 2254, 2341, 2457—8, 2819—20, 2901—2, 3020, 3065, 3176—7.

Whoever wrote the poem was not only a story-teller, but a thoughtful story-teller. Psychic touches abound—see, for instance, the fight with Grendel (730, 736—7, 753—4, 758—9, 767—9, 783—4, 793—4, 814—5) and that with the dragon (2550, 2554, 2561—2, 2564—5, etc.) and the very beautiful thought at line 2461. There are aphorisms—mostly good (22, 25, 455, 573—4, 2890—1), and Christian or moral reflections—mostly feeble (1055—1062, 1723—1769, 3054—3057).

Moreover, as a story-teller, if we leave out of account the faults which have already been noticed, his work is of no mean order. The descriptions of fighting are in particular full of fire and go, that of the fight at the bottom of the lake being especially good. Of the other narrative passages, the best are, I think, the irresistible, whirlwind-like Coming of Grendel (710—727), and the feverish, restless Raging of the Dragon—who is more of a beast and less of a monster than the Grendelkin (2287—2323), and, among the episodes, the very dramatic story of Freawaru (2032—2066) and the beautiful word-picture of the Passing of Scyld (32—52).

In descriptions of scenery and natural phenomena the poet displays a high degree of art. There are no passages in Anglo-Saxon poetry to be compared with lines 1357—1376 and 1408—1417 in the way of producing a striking scenic effect by a few broad touches, the charming passage in the Phoenix (ll. 13—84) being of a different and more delicate kind. Other fine bits will be found at lines 212—3, 217—8, 569—572, 917—8, 1131—7, 1609—1610, 1801—3.

There is something of the same art in the portraits. All the important characters have a well-marked individuality; the lines may be few, but they are always firm. Even where we are left to make up the character of any of the personages indirectly, from their actions, as in the case of Hrothgar, we are never left in doubt—such words as *āhlēop* in line 1397 define him for us. At the same time, as has been noted by Sarrazin (p. 73), there is no description of outward appearance, except that Beowulf is said to be big of body and that Hrothgar's hair is grey.

Then as to the speeches. There are occasional digressions, it is true, but as a rule they are very separable. Cut them out where there are any to cut out, and the speeches are admirably terse and direct. There is variety, too;—the pithy wisdom of Wealhtheow (1175—1188; 1214—1231), the pathos of the owner of rings (2247—2266), the common-sense, the manliness of Beowulf's final words (2794—2808). Lastly, one of the speeches—Beowulf's reply to Unferth,—is to be classed as one of the best pieces of writing—if not the best—in the poem. Here, in these less than four-score passionate lines, we have rude and outspoken repartee (530, 581—3, 587—9), proud and unblushing boast (532—4, 575—7, 584—6) a rapid narrative (535—581), Munchausen episodes (539—545, 574—5), flashes of nature (545—548, 569—572, 604—6), a pagan proverb (572—3), a bitter taunt (590—594), a reckless insult to the Danish race (595—601), a picture of a peaceful time to come (603—606)!

### III.—CONJECTURE

“The first pig was the Sun, and went into the wide world. The second was the Moon, and stayed behind the clouds. The third was the Earth, in which there was roast meat, and the fourth was the Sea, in which there was none. The fifth little pig was Man, who ran about grumbling at everything.”

PARRY—*The Scarlet Herring.*

HERE we enter on a wide field, as a glance at the bibliography of Beowulf will show. Scholar after scholar has peered into the haze, thought he could make something out, and in process of time evolved a theory which he has published to the world in pamphlet or booklet, in dissertation or school-programme. No book has given rise to more of

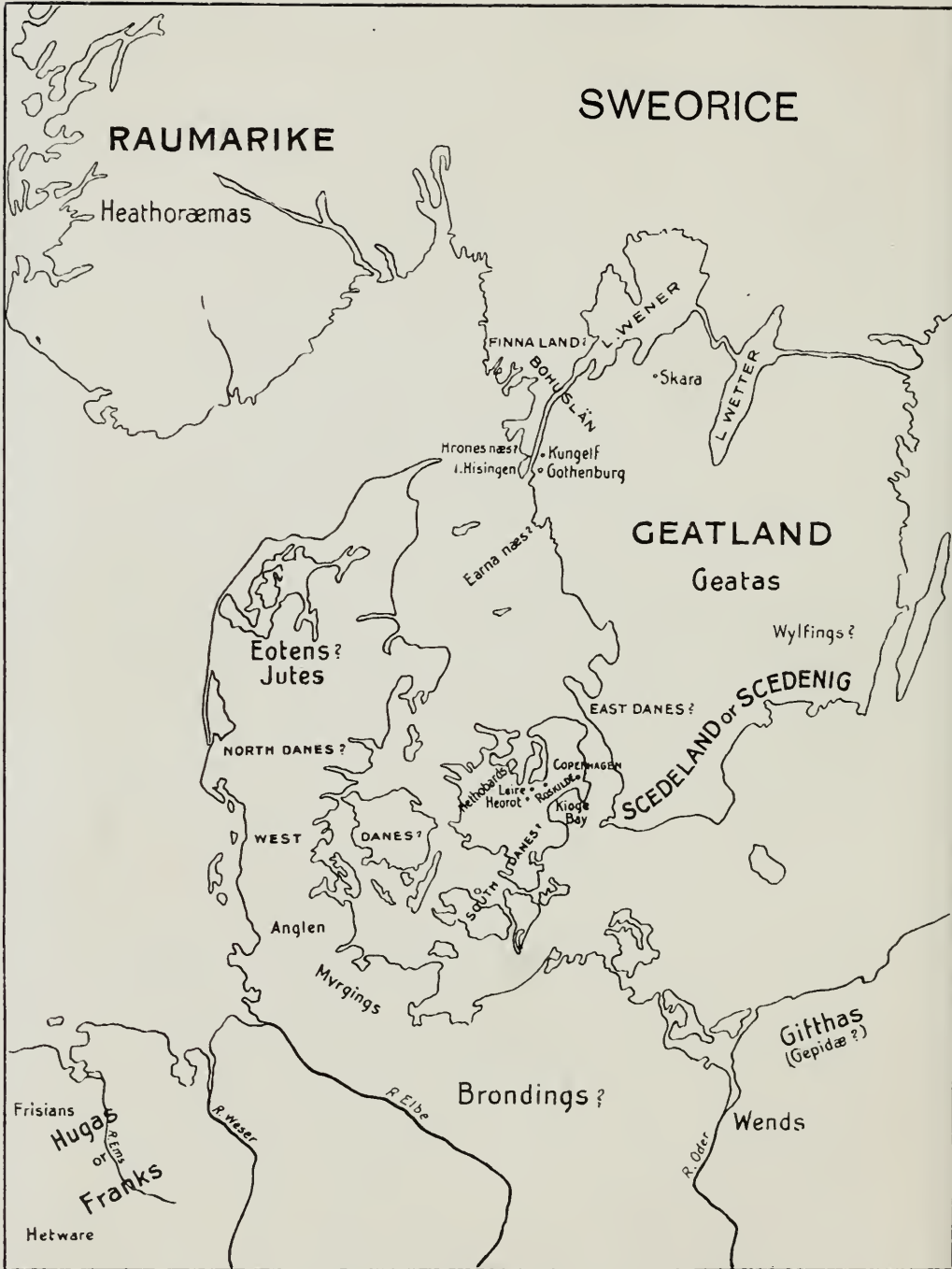
“The instinctive theorizing whence a fact  
Looks to the eye as the eye likes the look”

and scarcely any book furnishes less fact on which to base legitimate theorizing.

Detailed discussion of most of the hypotheses which have been put forward in reference to the poem generally, to its episodes, its authorship, its relation to other early legends, its questions of culture and history, must not be attempted here. These forewords to a translation will be confined to a short statement of what seems to me most likely to be true as regards the questions of geography, date and composition, with occasional reasons in support of the theory which I favour. The view I have accepted as regards other matters may be gathered







MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE GEOGRAPHY OF BEOWULF.

To face p. xxiii.

from the Index of Names, the running Analysis of the story, the Notes and so forth.

**Geography.** It may be taken as practically certain that the Danish island of Zealand was the theatre of the events recorded in the first two parts of the poem. More doubt has been raised as to the scene of the adventure with the dragon (Part III), but the evidence is strongly in favour of its being in the South of Sweden, somewhere on the coast of the district known as Bohuslän. Bugge's theory that the Geats were identical with the Jutes has not met with general acceptance, and I may say that the features of the Jutland coast, so far as I have knowledge of them, seem to me less in harmony with the scanty indications of the poem than those of the seaboard north of Gothenburg. There you *might* push a dragon over a cliff; in Jutland you could only roll him down a dune.

Sarrazin has assigned sites to Heorot and the few other localities named in the poem (*Beowulf-Studien*, pp. 4—35), and these with other places mentioned in his monograph, and the regions occupied by the various tribes referred to, etc. are shown on the map inserted opposite this page. I have myself visited the places indicated by Sarrazin, in the hope of obtaining some inspiration therefrom, but in vain. It seems to me that however much may be said for Sarrazin's identifications, with which I sympathize on other grounds, they cannot safely be upheld on that of physical resemblance to the vague descriptions in the poem. Moreover, as regards the supposed theatre of the first part of the poem, the fact that the ground has undergone geological disturbance in historic times makes all theorizing in the highest degree conjectural. Whatever may have been to see in former times, there is nothing there now in the way of a mere or fjord more terror-striking than Southampton Water. In fact the shores of the Roskilde and Isse-fjords are as unlike the scene of the Second Adventure, as reconstructed by Stopford Brooke, (Vol. I, pp. 59—62) as it is possible for them to be. On the Swedish coast north of Gothenburg, how-

ever, may be found places which would answer fairly well to his description.

**Date and Composition.** There are widely divergent opinions as to when and how and by whom the Beowulf was composed. Is the poem the work of one man or of several? Was it by a Dane or a Geat or an Englishman, or by a combination of two of these or of all three? Was it written in the seventh or the eighth century or later still? All these questions are beset with difficulties, on account of the slender data on which the answers must be based. For those who are interested in the subject, the works of Müllenhoff and ten Brink and Sarrazin (issued in 1888 and 1889) should be referred to, the two former being perfect marvels of minute analytical criticism and of complicated theorizing. They are indeed much too complicated, to my mind. When there is so little, so painfully little, to go upon, it seems to me that, other things being equal, preference should be given to the simplest theory which can reasonably be maintained. As will be seen, I have had regard to this principle in formulating the theory which is set forth in the following pages. It will be noticed that it is only partly original, and that where the positions of former writers have been adopted, I have not thought it necessary to give detailed reasons in support of them. The reader will please keep well in mind that there is no Beowulf-theory against which really formidable arguments cannot be marshalled, and that all I wish to say for the following is that it is the one which seems to me the least improbable.

My sympathies, then, are with the following propositions:—

- A. The poem (except a few interpolations) was written by one man.
- B. He was a heathen by birth, who had been converted to Christianity, but had not attained to anything beyond a rudimentary knowledge of its doctrines.
- C. He was an Anglian, and most probably a Mercian.
- D. He was the maker of the poem, and not merely a translator. Here and there he may have incorpo-

rated Danish or Geatic material without much alteration; but as a whole his poem is original somewhat in the same sense, for instance, as the Judith fragment.

- E. He wrote his poem between A.D. 660 and 700, the second part (from about line 2200 to the end) being composed some twenty years or so later than the first.

Proposition A is already accepted by the majority. Few there are who, like Müllenhoff, see clearly the work of six, or, like ten Brink, the work of seven separate poets and editors, although a considerable number would probably be found to agree with them in assigning the second part of the poem to another author than the first. In favour of the hypothesis of a single author for both parts the following considerations may be noted:—

1. There is no decided break between the first and second parts. Müllenhoff and ten Brink put it between lines 2199 and 2200. But line 2200 is joined very naturally to 2199 by the word "eft"; the supposed first part does not close with a moral reflection, an aphorism or other generality; and the conjectural ending does not coincide with that of a "fit."

2. Some striking peculiarities of style are common to both parts. Instances of these have already been given under the head of "The Poem as Literature."

3. Particular locutions used in both parts, for example:—

- (a) Catastrophe introduced by the same words (oð ðæt ān ongan) at lines 100 and 2210.
- (b) ðæt wæs gōd cyning occurs at lines 11, 863, and 2390.
- (c) hyne fyrwet bræc at lines 232, 1985, and 2784.
- (d) wel brucan is found at lines 1045, 2162 and 2812.
- (e) on frēan wære (l. 27) cp. on ðæs Waldendes wære at line 3109.
- (f) werod (*or* duguð) eall ārās at lines 651, 1790 and 3030.

This last, like mīne gefræge and several other expressions of which there are examples in both parts, are found in other poems besides Beowulf, so that too much stress must not be laid on their occurrence. Numerous further

correspondences may be gathered from Sz. (pp. 141—143).

4. Similarity in the general arrangement of words. For numerous examples drawn from both parts, see Aug. Todt, *die Wortstellung im Beowulf*, Anglia XVI., 226—260.

5. The Christian colouring is laid on in much the same degree in both parts. (This is only important if proposition B can be maintained.)

6. Consistency in the character of Beowulf and in the poet's views generally. See the references given in the Index of Proper Names s.v. *Beowulf*; and Sz. 71—74.

At the same time there is undoubtedly less colour about the second part than the first, and more gloom. The habit of foreboding which is noticeable in Part I is so prominent in Part II as to give a general tone of fatalistic hopelessness to it. Sunshine and shadow no longer alternate;—shadow is over all. And the poet enters into the feelings of the old so thoroughly that it seems almost certain that he had grown old himself.

We now come to our second proposition, B.—that the author was a heathen by birth, who had been converted to Christianity, but had never attained to anything beyond a rudimentary knowledge of its doctrines.

The most prevalent view is that the poem was originally heathen, and that it was touched up at a later date by a Christian hand. "The poem is essentially heathen," says a writer in Notes and Queries (8th Series, Vol. I, p. 305). "The person who copied out the only MS. which has come down to us added here and there a touch to fit it for Christian reading or recitation."

To this theory there seem to me to be the strongest objections.

The number of Christian passages is very great, and more than 50 of them are incidental and passing allusions to the Christian God, his attributes and influence on mankind.\* There are also a few allusions to evil spirits, hell

\* I quote the following references, giving only the first line of passages consisting of more than one line, from an article entitled "The Christian Colouring in the Beowulf" by F. A. Blackburn in Vol. 12 of the publications of the Mod. Language Association, Baltimore—ll. 13, 16, 27, 73, 169?, 227, 316, 381, 440, 478, 570,

and the judgment\* (163, 588, 756, 788, 808, 852, 977—9, 1274, 2741—3, 2819—20, 3069—3073), three (90—114, 1261—1266 and 1687—1693) to Old Testament History, and one (175—188), in which heathen practices are spoken of with disapproval.

Is it possible for all these references to have been inserted by a later hand? I think not. Let us bear especially in mind the large number of incidental allusions. To have made such a considerable number of isolated alterations in the original text would have meant infinite trouble for the editor, and it imputes very great skill to him. To all appearances he must, in many cases, have begun his emendation with the second half-line, so that he would be hampered by having to observe the alliteration of the first half-line (227, 381, 440, 478 etc.).

It is very possible that lines 175—188 and the references to Cain are interpolations, as they are easily detachable, like the lines at the beginning and end of the Wanderer, and the latter part of the Seafarer; but the rest are nearly all short allusions which are ingrained in the heart of the poem—not, be it observed, in the episodes. We find them not only in the moralising speeches of Hrôthgar, but in those of Beowulf (440, 570, 588, 685, 967, 977—9, 1658, 1661—1664, 2469, 2741—3, 2794). As a rule they are introduced quite naturally, and none of them offend against the rules of alliteration. If they are insertions, why do we see nothing in other parts of the poem of such deft craftsmanship in verse as they imply? Why has not the supposed skilful editor tried his hand upon some of the rough edges of the poem? There are plenty of places over which such a man would presum-

625, 670, 685, 696, 700, 706, 711, 786, 811, 928, 930, 940, 945, 955, 967, 1056, 1271, 1314? 1397, 1553, 1609, 1626, 1658, 1661, 1682, 1716, 1724, 1751, 1778, 1841, 1997, 2182, 2186? 2292, 2329, 2469, 2650, 2794, 2857, 2874, 3054, 3109.

\* In the hell-passages the context is so often Christian in character (cp. also 179) that it seems to me unlikely that there is a reference to the Scandinavian goddess of the dead (Hela=Persephone) in any of them. See, however, the note to line 853.

ably have longed to run his nail, but they remain in all their jaggedness.

Then again it may fairly be contended that a Christian who took the trouble to revise the poem at all would have made his additions more distinctively Christian. But look at them! There is no mention of Christ or the Church in the whole book, or even of the Trinity, and so far as the passages go, their theology is covered by the Old Testament,\* and a pious Jew would have no difficulty in assenting to them all. Is it not more reasonable to suppose that we have here the work of a man who had become Christian because the court had newly become Christian, without having, or wanting to have, any definite instruction?

This peculiarity—the colourless nature of the Christian parts—is quite a different matter from the mixture of heathenism and Christianity which we have in special passages (*e.g.* at lines 2526, 7), and of which we have evidence also in the general tone of the poem—in the attitude, for instance, of Beowulf towards the Deity in lines 2739—2743. This mixture is often met with in the later Anglo-Saxon literature, and was, in fact a prominent feature of the religion of the age (*cp.* SB. i, pp. 263—266). There is no need to explain its occurrence in Beowulf by interpolation, that *deus ex machina* of theorists;—it is a natural product of the times, and it is suggested that we simply find it in Beowulf in an early form.

Next we have to consider the proposition (C), that the author was an Anglian, and most probably a Mercian.

Many arguments—some very plausible—have been brought forward to support the theory that the original author was a Dane. Equally plausible arguments can be adduced to show that he was a Geat. But although I do not wish to underrate the importance of these arguments, or to pretend that there are not difficulties about maintaining an English authorship of the poem, the reasons for such an authorship seem to me on the whole to outweigh all

\* Verses 977—9 are perhaps an exception. The “great doom” savours more of the New Testament than of the Old, and is a favourite theme of later and pronouncedly Christian writers.



others. An exhaustive handling of this subject would require a volume, and it can only be treated very shortly here.

As regards the arguments for a Danish and Geatic authorship respectively, it may be pointed out that to a great extent they neutralise each other. In line 1, for instance, the writer seems to speak of the Danes as a Geat might do; yet at lines 640, 1301, 1785 and 1792 Beowulf is referred to as "the Geat," which looks as if he were being regarded from the Danish standpoint. Sarrazin (*Beowulf-Studien*, pp. 80, 85) considers, moreover, that the descriptions of scenery are more careful and detailed in the first part of the poem than in the second, and that this might be expected if the primary author were a Dane. But, on the other hand, all the names, except Heorot, of definite points mentioned in the poem (Hreosnabeorh 2478, Hrefnawudu 2926, Hrefnesholt 2935, Earnanæs 3031) occur in the second part, and are introduced in a way which might be thought to imply familiarity with them and to argue a Geatic authorship. The Danes are more loaded with complimentary epithets than the Geats, and yet the writer inserts a speech in which a Geat (Beowulf) roundly imputes cowardice to the Danes, and lines 1018—9 imply that they were treacherous in later times. The poem opens with a Danish genealogy; but it contains more detail about the contemporary history of the Geats' royal family than about that of the Danes.

Now let me put very briefly the chief points which seem to me to tell in favour of an English authorship, observing first of all that the objections to the author being a Dane or Geat are mainly specific—like those which have just been quoted,—while those against an English author are more general, as, for instance:—Why should an Englishman write a poem in praise of a Geatic hero?

1. The poem *is* in the Old English language.
2. The story is not found in Continental literature. The connections which some have attempted to establish for it belong rather to the domain of folk-lore.
3. Kennings, which are a characteristic feature in

Anglo-Saxon poetry, abound in every part of Beowulf, and are rare in Scandinavian literature.

4. If it is conceded that the author was a Christian, and that the numerous Christian passages are not due to a late editor, this is of itself sufficient proof of English authorship;—for Christianity was not introduced into Denmark or South Sweden until considerably after the latest date which can reasonably be assigned to the poem.

5. Similarly as regards the classical loan-words in the poem. Some at least of these (*e.g.* wīn, mīl) represent things and ideas which were not known to the Scandinavian culture of the time.

All this does not go to prove that the author was an Anglian, but only that he was an Englishman. The question of Anglian, and preferably Mercian, origin must now be considered.

Stopford Brooke, after observing the curious fact that the Beowulf story did not, like the other sagas of the North, become a part of the North-German cycle of romance, says, "I have sometimes thought that the Angles alone "threw the myths and tales of it into lays, and that when "the whole body of them emigrated to our island, they "left the Continent naked of the tale" . . . "The Angles "went *en masse*\*, with all their women and all their "bards, and they would take their literature with them. "It was they, I hold, who in our England worked on the "lays before the Christian poet wove them together." (SB. i, 132, 133).

Setting aside the idea of a late Christian editor, there seems to me to be much force in what Stopford Brooke says. And here I may refer to a point which has been urged by Sarrazin in favour of a Danish authorship—namely, that certain words of Scandinavian origin appear in Beowulf which are not found or are found very rarely elsewhere in Anglo-Saxon literature (Sz 68). Now these words, wherever they came from, must have been thoroughly intelligible to the hearers of the Anglo-Saxon poem, and as the Anglians in their continental home

\* Unlike the Saxons, part of whom remained in their old country.

would, from its position, have had closer relations with Scandinavia than the Saxons, it seems very probable that they were in the first instance introduced into the English language through an Anglian dialect.

Further reasons may be adduced in support of the view that the poem was not only Anglian but Mercian. The writer goes out of his way to mention Garmund, Offa and Eomaer, ancestors of the Mercian royal family. Wealhtheow, Hrothgar's queen, who appears prominently in Part I of the story, was a lady of the Helmings, a tribe connected by place-names with Mercia and East Anglia (Sarrazin in *ES.* XXIII., pp. 228, 229; *A.p.* 43) and the name borne by her son Hrothmund appears in a genealogy of the East Anglian kings. It may also be pointed out that ten Brink inclines to Mercia as the region from which his supposed versions C, B, D, E and X arose (*Untersuchungen*, pp. 231—236); and that Mercian forms (*e.g.* *nemne*) certainly appear in the text side by side with West Saxon ones. It is probable, moreover, that our tenth century West Saxon transcription had a Mercian original rather than a Northumbrian one, because, as Wülker has observed in another connection (*Anglia* XVII., 108) the Northumbrians had no connection with the West Saxons, while on the other hand Egbert the West Saxon King conquered Mercia and put an end to the kingdom. See also ten Brink, pp. 240, 241.

Last of all, a Mercian origin harmonizes best with what seems to me the most probable date of the poem.

Proofs of the next proposition (D)—that the poem was not for the most part a translation, can be collected from what has gone before; *e.g.* from its Christian character.

But there is one additional point to which I may direct attention. Although, as we have seen, the poem contains many expressions which are not confined to Anglo-Saxon poetry, it is distinctively English in other ways;—in its conciseness and vigour and especially in its dignified soberness and tender sadness. For the forcefulness we may compare the *Battle of Maldon* and the *Finnsburg* fragment; it is ingrained in the heart of all these poems, and should be observed particularly in the speeches.

Indeed if we compare the reported speech in Beowulf with that in the Sagas we shall remark a great difference. Boastful challenges, long harangues and episodic digressions are characteristic of the former, while conversations as to matters of fact and consultations as to plans of action preponderate in the latter.

The sadness is even more English than the vigour. It permeates Anglo-Saxon poetry to such an extent that we can hardly get away from it.

It may be added that if we assume a translation, we must postulate an original which would presumably have some sort of family resemblance to the Older Edda, and we should expect the translator to follow generally the methods of the original Scandinavian poet in his handling of the verse. Yet we find the ways of the Beowulf-poet to be akin to those of other Anglo-Saxon poets, and in striking contrast to those of the Northerners. This is well brought out in a note at pp. 425—427 of Professor W. P. Ker's *Epic and Romance*.

Upon the question of date (Proposition E), it seems practically certain that it must be between A.D. 512 and A.D. 752—the former date being that of Chocilaicus' (= Hygelac's) raid (referred to in passages beginning at lines 1202, 2354, 2501 and 2914), and the latter that of the fall of the Merovingian dynasty (see p. xi).\* We must, moreover, allow some time for the reigns of Heardred and Beowulf, and for the latter to become exalted into the position of a hero from that of a historical character. Arnold adds 158 years on this account, and thus brings the earlier limit up to A.D. 670.

It seems to me that the language—and I am speaking here of the vocabulary rather than the grammar—warrants us in putting the poem at as early a date as is possible consistently with the foregoing considerations. For purposes of comparison let us take the poem of Widsith, the

\* The way in which the poet speaks of the earlier Offa at lines 1949—1960 seems to me inconsistent with his having known anything of the later Offa; and this would help to confirm the view that the nearer limit of time must not be placed later than A.D. 750.

main body of which was certainly composed at an earlier date than any we can assign to *Beowulf*—the later parts being chiefly lists of proper names which we can leave out of account. It is most remarkable that out of the 300 words or so contained in this short poem which are not proper names, all except twenty are also to be found in *Beowulf*; and that in the hundred lines which are not taken up with lists of names, we have no less than 27 locutions and phrases which can be paralleled from *Beowulf*.\* Mention has already been made of a striking grammatical peculiarity which is common to both poems; and the *Widsith* contains at lines 11—13 a passage of a monitory character which bears a strong resemblance to those at lines 20, 24, 1172, 1534, 2166 and 2708 of *Beowulf*. All this points to the early limit being nearest to the truth.

Next let us ask how (say) A.D. 660 would suit, with a Mercian poet, tinged with the superficial kind of Christianity we have already referred to.

I think it would suit very well.

A few years ago there was a short article in *Anglia* (XVII, 106) on the Home of *Cynewulf*, in which Professor Wülker pointed out how the peaceful state of Mercia, as evidenced by the long reigns of its kings, would conduce to literary activity. Material evidence of a Mercian literary *Blütezeit* we have none; but hear Stopford Brooke:—“His [= Penda’s] son Peada, whom he made viceroy “of the middle Angles, became Christian in 653, and introduced four Northumbrian priests into his province”... “Two years after he [Penda] was slain near Winwald, “and on his death all Mercia became Christian.” (i, 236). “Mercia rose to great honour during the two hundred “years of which we have here written [600—800], and it “is fitting to briefly touch the points in Mercian history “which belong to the interests of literature. We have “seen that sometime after Penda’s death Mercia became “Christian. Wulfhere his son—657-675, in the very “years, that is, that vernacular literature began so bravely “in Northumbria—founded a number of abbeys and

\* A list of these parallels will be found at p. 183.

“monasteries. Medeshamstede, in the fen country then  
“subject to Mercia, may claim him as one of its patrons,  
“but the whole story is mixed up with legend and forg-  
“ery. Fable gathers also round other foundations attri-  
“buted to him; but the growth of fable proves, at least,  
“that centres of learning now arose in the heathen realm.  
“Under Æthelred, who followed Wulfhere, the Mercian  
“Church was organised.” (ii, 24).

So I picture to myself a Mercian courtier—perhaps a scop—whose early life may have been spent under the heathen Penda, who changed his religion with the court, without being able to get, or perhaps even wishing to get, definite instruction in the new faith, and who perhaps came in some degree under Northumbrian literary influences, writing the earlier part of the poem, pretty much as we now have it, about A.D. 660, and the later some twenty years or so after that.

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BEOWULF  
A TRANSLATION  
INTO ENGLISH PROSE.



# The Argument

## I

### *BEOWULF IN DENMARK*

#### A. BEOWULF AND GRENDEL

**T**HE poem begins with a reference to the ancestry of Hrothgar, who belongs to the Scylding dynasty of Danish kings.

This Hrothgar, who was a powerful and prosperous prince, builds a magnificent hall in which his kingly gifts might be distributed and banquets might take place, and he gives it the name of Heorot.

After a time a murderous monster, called Grendel, visits the Hall by night and carries off and eats the occupants. For twelve years these ravages continue, till Heorot is abandoned and Hrothgar is in despair.

Of this story Beowulf, nephew of Hygelac, king of the Geats, hears in his home across the sea (near Gothenburg?). So he sets sail with fourteen comrades for the Danish coast,

intent on gaining treasure and glory by ridding the Danes of this scourge. On reaching the Danish coast (Seeland) the party are challenged by the coast-guard, and having given a satisfactory answer, are allowed to go up to the royal city (Leire, near Roeskilde?) and have an interview with Hrothgar. Beowulf explains his errand to Hrothgar, who receives him gladly. A courtier named Unferth taunts Beowulf with having failed in a certain swimming contest, and receives a crushing answer from him, during the festivities with which Hrothgar honours the visitors.

At night the Hall is abandoned to Beowulf and his fellows, to keep watch therein. Grendel enters the Hall, and seizes and devours one of the sleeping Geats while Beowulf looks on. Then he clutches at the monster, who struggles desperately to get out of his supernaturally powerful grip, and only escapes to die in his haunt on the moors by letting Beowulf wrench off his arm. The arm is set up at the Hall and there is great rejoicing. A holiday party of Danes set off on horseback to trace Grendel's path across the moor by his blood, and amuse themselves by racing and telling tales.

In the evening there are great festivities, and there is much giving of rich presents by Hrothgar to Beowulf and his company.

## B. BEOWULF AND GRENDEL'S MOTHER

The same night the Hall, now purged and re-adorned, is garrisoned by Danish warriors, when lo! another fiend, of whom Grendel was the offspring, comes to the Hall and carries off Aeschere, Hrothgar's favourite courtier, to her lair.

The king again appeals to Beowulf for help, which is at once promised. Beowulf and his men, guided by the king and an escort of Danes, set off without delay for the haunt of the ogre—a weird lake, or more probably, an almost land-locked arm of the sea. Arrived there, Beowulf plunges into the water, and the sea-fiend he is seeking, enraged at the invasion of her realms by a man, snatches at him and bears him off to her cavern. There is a furious fight, and Beowulf is at last victorious and kills the monster. Then he sees the dead body of Grendel, cuts off his head, and returns with it to the surface of the mere, round which his followers are sadly waiting for him, hoping against hope. So Beowulf returns in triumph, with his fellows, and Grendel's head, and tells the story of the fight to Hrothgar, who makes a long speech and again honours Beowulf with costly presents. After that Beowulf returns to his own country and relates his adventures to King Hygelac, giving up to him all the treasure he had won.

## II

*BEOWULF IN GEATLAND*

After the death of Hygelac his young son Heardred becomes king, and his cousin Beowulf acts loyally as his guardian, having refused the throne for himself. Later on, Heardred dies in battle and the crown passes to Beowulf, who reigns well for fifty years.

At the end of that time a fiery dragon, who watches over a hoard of precious things hidden three hundred years before in a barrow by the last survivor of a noble race, and one of whose treasures had just been pilfered by an outlaw who had taken refuge in the dragon's retreat, ravages the land with fire in revenge for his loss, not being able to discover the culprit.

The aged king determines to rid the country of this pest single-handed, just as he rided Hrothgar's country of Grendel and the mere-wife. With him he takes a picked band of twelve men, of whom his kinsman Wiglaf is one, and goes to the dragon's mound. There he meets the dragon and fights bravely, but the fiery breath of the dragon puts him in sore straits. His men, who watch from a hill-side, are all panic-stricken and retreat into a wood, instead of going forth to the rescue. Wiglaf, however, is struck with remorse



and turns back to help Beowulf. Between them they kill the dragon, but Beowulf has been mortally injured, and feels that his end is very near. He expresses his last wishes and has the treasures brought out of the cave for him to look at before he dies. The poem ends with his death and the burning of his body.

[NOTE.—*The italic headings to the paragraphs of the translation have been so framed as to elucidate as far as possible the obscurer parts of the poem, and to admit of being read continuously and independently of the translation. Thus read, they will be found to present the story of Beowulf in much greater detail than the foregoing Argument.*]



# Beowulf

## A Translation into English Prose

### PART I

#### *BEOWULF AND GRENDEL*

#### INTRODUCTION

#### THE PASSING OF SCYLD

[Lines 1—52]

(1—11) *The poet begins by referring to the glory and prowess of the Danish chiefs in the past as matter of common report.*

*Of these chiefs, Scyld, who gave the Danes their name of Scyldings, is especially mentioned as a successful raider, and as having subjected all the neighbouring princes, even those across the sea. How he was first found helpless is told in lines 45 and 46.*

**L**O! We have heard of the glory of the  
Spear-Danes' warrior-kings in days of yore,  
—how the princes did valorous deeds!

Often Scyld of the Sheaf took mead-benches away  
from troops of foes, from many tribes. The noble  
5 inspired awe from the time that he was first found  
helpless; for that he met with consolation, increased  
under the heavens and throve in honours, until each  
one of those who sojourned near, across the whale's

10 road, had to serve him, and to pay him tribute.  
A noble king was he!

*(12—25) Scyld has a son, Beowulf or Beaw (not the hero of the poem), who apparently succeeds him in his old age, when his hold on the reins of power had slackened. He also becomes famous in Scedeland, the southernmost part of Sweden, which belonged to the Danes. His popularity would seem to have arisen from open-handedness, which the poet, in a didactic passage, recommends as a paying virtue.*

Later, a son was born to him, a young child in his castle, whom God had sent the people for their help; He knew of the distress from hostile deeds,  
15 which they, lacking a lord, long suffered in the past. To him therefore, the Prince of Life, the glorious Ruler, granted worldly honour; Beowulf the son of Scyld, in Scedelands was renowned, his  
20 fame spread widely. So shall a young man act in noble wise, by splendid money-gifts amongst his father's friends, that afterwards, in later years, willing companions may stand by him,—the folk may do him service when war comes. By commendable deeds  
25 a man may grow in power in any of the tribes!

*(26—52) So Scyld, about to die after a long reign, was at his own request taken to the sea-shore by his body-guard, and sent off to sea in a ship adorned with costly armour and other things, to do him honour, as was meet for a true sea-king and one who, as a child, had been put out to sea alone in like manner. And thus he passed into the Great Unknown!*

Then, at the fated hour, Scyld, full of exploits, departed, to go into the keeping of the Lord; and they, his fast friends, carried him to the water's edge, as he himself had asked when he, protector  
30 of the Scyldings governed by his behests;—when, dear ruler of his country, he had long held sway. There, at the landing-place, the ring-prowed vessel stood; the prince's ship, sheeny and eager to start.  
35 They laid then the beloved chieftain, giver-out of rings, on the ship's bosom—the glorious hero by the mast. There were brought many treasures, ornaments from<sup>1</sup> far-off lands. Never have I known a keel more fairly fitted out with war-weapons  
40 and battle-trappings, swords and coats of mail. Upon his breast lay many treasures, which were to travel far with him, into the power of the flood. Certainly they furnished him with no less of gifts,  
45 of tribal-treasures, than those did who, in his early days, started him over the sea alone, child as he was. Moreover, they set besides a golden banner high above his head, and let the flood bear him,—gave  
50 him to the sea. Their soul was sad, their spirit sorrowful. Who received that load, men, chiefs of councils, heroes under heaven, cannot for certain tell!

## I

## THE HALL HEOROT

[Lines 53—114]

(53—63) *After the passing of Scyld, Beowulf the Dane reigned a long time, and a son, Healfdene, was born to him, who ruled well and in turn had four children—Heorogar, Hrothgar and Halga (sons),*

*and a daughter, Elan, who married Ongentheow, the Swedish king.*

Then in the strongholds was Beowulf of the Scyldings, dear king of the nation, long time  
 55 renowned among warriors,—the prince his father had gone elsewhere from the earth,—until the noble Healfdene was born to him. While he lived, old and fierce in battle, he ruled the Scyldings graciously. To him were born into the world  
 60 four children in succession, Heorogar, captain of armies, and Hrothgar and Halga the Good. I have been told that Elan was the wife of Ongentheow, the cherished consort of the warrior-Scylfing.

*(64--73) Hrothgar was a victorious and popular prince, and was minded to build a huge hall for feasting and such like, in which he could also deal out gifts to his thanes.*

Then was success in war granted to Hrothgar,  
 65 glory in battle, so that his faithful tribesmen served him willingly, till the young warriors increased, a mighty troop of men.

It came into his mind that he would order men to build a hall-building,—a festive-chamber greater  
 70 than the sons of men had ever heard of—and there-within to give all things to young and old whatever God had given him, except dominion and the lives of men.

*(74--81) Many men were impressed for this service, and the hall was quickly finished. Hrothgar*

*dubbed it Heorot and made it a place of banqueting and present-giving, as he had promised.*

Then on all sides I heard the work was being  
 75 put on many a tribe throughout this middle-earth,—  
 to adorn the people's hall. In time—quickly, by  
 mortals' reckoning—it befel that the greatest of  
 palace-halls was quite ready for him. He who by his  
 word had empire far and wide, devised for it the name  
 80 of Heorot. He did not break his promise, but he  
 gave out ornaments and treasure at the banquet.

*(81—85) The poet hints that the Hall was eventually destroyed by fire; and refers obscurely to the episode of Ingeld and Freawaru.*

The hall towered, lofty and wide-gabled,—it  
 awaited the hostile surges of malignant fire. Nor  
 was it long time after that the murderous vindic-  
 85 tiveness twixt son-in-law and father-in-law was to  
 arise,—the sequel to a deadly quarrel.

*(86—101) The daily revelry in hall enrages the soul of an evil monster, Grendel. That was the fiend who, after God had created the world and given men the joys of light and life, began his devilish machinations.*

90 Then for a time the mighty spirit who dwelt in  
 darkness bore it angrily, in that he heard each day  
 loud revelry in hall;—there was the sound of the  
 harp, the bright song of the minstrel.

He who could recount the origin of men from

distant ages spoke,—he said that the Almighty made the earth, the beauteous plain which water belts around, and, triumphing in power, appointed  
 95 the effulgence of the sun and moon as light for the land-dwellers, and decked the earth-regions with leaves and branches, and fashioned life for all the kinds that live and move.

100 So then brave men lived prosperously in joys, until a certain fiend in hell began to compass deeds of malice.

*(102—114) Like all other monsters, he was of the brood of Cain, and dwelt, an outcast spirit, among the moors and fens.*

The grim stranger was called Grendel, the well-known border-haunter, who held the moors, the fen  
 105 and fastness; the hapless being occupied a while the lair of monsters, after the Creator had banished them. On Cain's kindred did the everlasting Lord avenge the murder, for that he (Cain) had slain Abel. He took no pleasure in that quarrel, but he, the  
 110 Creator, drove him far from mankind for that misdeed. Thence all evil broods were born, monsters and elves and sea-devils,—giants also, who long time fought with God, for which he gave them their reward.

## II

### GRENDDEL'S VISITS TO HEOROT

[Lines 115—188]

*(115—120) Grendel prowls about at night, to see how the Danes bestow themselves after the*



*banquet, and he finds a band of warriors asleep within the hall, secure and happy.*

115 So, after night had come, he (Grendel) went to the lofty house, to find out in what sort the Ring-Danes had quartered in it after their beer-carouse. Then found he therewithin a band of noble warriors, sleeping after the banquet; they knew not sorrow, misery of men.

*(120—125) He swoops down on thirty men and carries them off to his lair.*

120 Soon was the grim and greedy demon of destruction ready, wild and furious, and seized thirty thanes in their resting-place. Thence started he off again, exulting in plunder, to go home, and to  
125 seek out his abode with that fill of slaughter.

*(126—134) At dawn the foul deed came to light; there was weeping and wailing. King Hrothgar's grief is intense.*

Then in the morning light, at break of day, was Grendel's war-craft manifest to men; then was a wail, a mighty cry at morn, upraised after the meal.  
130 The famous prince, the long-distinguished chieftain, sat downcast, the strong man suffered, he endured sorrow for his lieges, when they surveyed the traces of the foe, the cursèd spirit; that anguish was too strong, too loathly and long-lasting.

*(134—146) On the next night Grendel is there again and commits further outrages. Hence the*

*Hall is deserted by the sleepers, and Grendel is master of it.*

135 There was no longer break, but after one night he again contrived more deeds of murder,—had no regret for violence and outrage—he was too fixed on them. Then was the man easy to find who sought elsewhere a more remote resting-place  
140 for himself, a bed among the bowers (of the castle), when the hall-warder's hate had been made known to him, and truthfully related on clear evidence. He who escaped the fiend kept himself afterwards farther and more secure.

145 So then he (Grendel) was master, and strove, opposed to right, one against all; until the best of houses idle stood.

*(146—158) For twelve whole years Hrothgar suffered the humiliation of knowing that these atrocities went on unchecked, and that it was matter of common report that Grendel could neither be fought off nor bought off.*

It was a long while, twelve winters' space, the Scyldings' guardian endured distress—all sorts of  
150 woes, of ample sorrows—because it was then without concealment known to sons of men—sadly in song—that Grendel fought from time to time against Hrothgar,—kept up hate-begotten feuds, outrage and enmity for many years—continual strife,—and would  
155 not peaceably avert life's havoc from one man of Danish stock, nor stay for tribute,—nor could any veteran there expect a brilliant rescue from the murderer's hands.

(159—169) *Night after night the grisly horrors continued, and Grendel occupied the Hall. But he dare not mount the throne, being kept back by a vague awe from a spot which God had in his special keeping.*

160 But the demon, the dark death-shadow, kept pursuing young and old; caught and entrapped them. Night after night he held the misty moors,—men know not where such sorcerers go in their wanderings.

165 So many outrages, severe afflictions, did the foe of man, the fearful solitary, achieve in quick succession. Heorot, he held, the gold-bespangled hall, on the dark nights. He might not, however, mount the throne,—a precious possession in the Creator's sight,—nor did he know His purpose.

(170—189) *Time passed on, councils were held, offerings were made at the shrines of idols, but the national disaster did not cease.*

*(The fact was, says the poet, that they were woe-fully in the wrong with their devil-worship; they knew nothing of the true God.)*

170 That was great sorrow, breaking of heart to the guardian of the Scyldings. Many a mighty one sat oft in council, pondered about help,—what it were best for brave-minded men to contrive against the sudden  
175 terrors. Sometimes they vowed offerings at idol-temples,—prayed aloud that the Destroyer of Life would provide them help against the national distress. Such was their custom,—the hope of the

180 heathen,—they remembered hell in the thoughts of their hearts. They knew not the Creator, Judge of deeds; they knew not the Lord God, nor verily had they learned to worship the Protector of the heavens, the glorious Ruler.

Woe is his who is destined, through savage hate,  
185 to thrust his soul into the fire's embrace, to hope for no comfort, in no wise to change.

Weal is his, who may after his death-day stand before the Lord, and claim a refuge in the Father's arms!

## III

## BEOWULF'S JOURNEY AND ARRIVAL

[Lines 189—257]

*(189—198) At last it came to pass that while Hrothgar was brooding over the nation's evil case, Beowulf, a valiant thane of Hygelac, King of the Geats, heard in his own country of the deeds of Grendel.*

So then the son of Healfdene was constantly  
190 disturbed by carking care; the wise prince could not ward off the trouble; the suffering which had befallen the people, the fiercely grim, enforced distress, greatest of night evils, was too severe, too loathly and long-lasting. This—the deeds of  
195 Grendel—a thane of Hygelac, excellent among the Geats,—he who was strongest of mankind in might in this life's-day, noble and stalwart,—heard of in his fatherland.

(198—209) *So he determined to take ship and offer his services to Hrothgar, and in this he was encouraged even by the staidier spirits. A band of fourteen lusty men-at-arms went with him, and a tried pilot.*

He bade make ready for him a good wave-tra-  
200 verser,—said he would seek the warrior-king, the noted prince, over the swan's-road, since he had need of men. Prudent folk did not blame him at all for that expedition, though he was dear to them; they egged on the stout-hearted one, and looked for  
205 favorable omens. The hero had chosen champions from the people of the Geats, from the keenest he could find; as one of fifteen he took ship; a man who was a skilful mariner pointed out the land-marks.

(210—228) *Here follows a graphic picture of the embarkation, the voyage and the landing—one of the gems of the poem. The party thank God for their prosperous journey.*

210 Time passed on; the bark was on the waves, the boat under the lee of the cliff. The warriors, equipped, stepped on to the prow; the currents churned the sea against the sand; men bore into  
215 the bosom of the ship bright armour, splendid war-gear; the heroes, the warriors on their willing adventure shoved off the vessel of braced timbers. Then the foamy-necked floater, most bird-like, started off over the billowy sea, urged onwards by the wind,  
220 until about the same time on the second day the curvèd prow had journeyed on so far that the

voyagers saw the land, the sea-cliffs, glisten—the steep mountains, the huge promontories. Then was the sea traversed, the voyage at an end.

225 After that the people of the Weders went quickly up on to dry land, they made fast the ship; their corslets, their battle-dress, rattled; they thanked God that for them the sea-paths had been easy.

*(229—257) The Danish coast-warden, bursting with curiosity, sees the party unloading their implements of war. He hurriedly rides down to the shore, challenges the new comers, spear in hand, explains his office, and asks the company who they are, and what their business is, observing that the whole band come in no peaceful guise, and that one of them (Beowulf, no doubt) is to all appearance a person of distinction.*

Then from the rampart the watchman of the  
 230 Scyldings, who had to guard the sea-cliffs, saw them lift bright shields and trim war-harness over the gangway. In the thoughts of his mind he was bursting with curiosity as to who these men were.  
 235 Then he, Hrothgar's officer, went off to ride on his horse to the shore; mightily he shook the strong spear-shaft in his hands, and asked in words of parley: "Who are ye, clad in the harness of  
 "such as bear arms, who have thus come and  
 "brought a towering ship over the water-ways, a  
 240 "ring-prowed bark hither over the seas? I have  
 "been acting as coast-guard, I kept watch over the  
 "shore, so that on Danish land no enemy might do  
 "us harm by naval harryings. No shield-bearers

245 “have ever begun to land here more openly,—nor  
 “did ye know at all the pass-word of men at arms,  
 “the permission of kinsmen. Never have I seen a  
 “mightier noble upon earth, a warrior in armour,  
 “than is one of you; that is no stay-at-home tricked  
 250 “out with weapons, unless his countenance, his peer-  
 “less form belies him.

“Now, I must know your origin, ere ye go  
 “further, faithless spies, on Danish ground. Now,  
 255 “ye strangers from far, ye sea-traversers, hear my  
 “simple opinion;—to make known whence your  
 “coming is, quickness is best!”

## IV

## THE ERRAND TOLD

[Lines 258—319]

*(258—272) To him Beowulf makes answer that he and his party are Geats, from Hygelac's court; that he himself is the son of Ecgtheow, a famous chief; and that they have all come on a special and friendly mission to Hrothgar.*

To him answered the chieftain; the leader of  
 260 the troop unlocked his store of words:—“We are  
 “people of the Geatish nation and hearth—compan-  
 “ions of Hygelac. My father was renowned  
 “among the folk, a noble prince named Ecgtheow.  
 “He tarried many winters before he, an old man,  
 265 “passed away from his dwelling; each of the wise  
 “men far and wide throughout the earth recalls him  
 “readily. We have come to seek thy lord, the son  
 “of Healfdene, the protector of the people, with

“honourable intent ; do thou favour us with instruc-  
 270 “ tions. We have a great errand to the famous  
 “ Ruler of the Danes, nor shall anything be hid of  
 “ what I have in mind.”

*(272—285) Beowulf has heard that some secret devastator has instituted a reign of terror among the Danes, and he can offer Hrothgar good counsel on the great question whether this scourge is ever to cease or not.*

“Thou knowest if it is so, as verily we heard say,  
 “that among the Scyldings some foeman, some  
 275 “secret ravager, effects by terrorism in dark nights  
 “malignity untold, carnage and crushing shame.  
 “I can give Hrothgar good counsel about this,  
 “with candid mind,—how he, the wise and good,  
 “may overcome the fiend ; whether for him the  
 280 “torment of afflictions should ever cease, salvation  
 “come at last, and the seethings of care wax cooler ;  
 “or he should ever hereafter endure the stress of  
 “trouble—crushing misery, long as the best of  
 285 “houses lasts there in its lofty place.”

*(286—300) The watchman accepts these friendly assurances, and allows the little band to pass on, armed. He is even well disposed enough to promise to set a guard over their ship till they return, and he ends with a compliment to Beowulf. Such a man will surely return uninjured from the fray!*

The watchman, bold retainer, answered where he sat on his horse:—“The keen shield-warrior,



“ who judges well, shall know the difference between  
“ the two—your words and deeds. I gather that this  
290 “ is a company friendly to the lord of the Scyldings.  
“ Pass forth, bearing your weapons and armour,—I  
“ will guide you. Moreover, I will bid my comrades  
“ honourably guard against all enemies, your ship,  
295 “ your fresh-tarred vessel, on the beach, until at  
“ last the wooden craft with twisted prow bears the  
“ beloved man back to the Weders’ confines over the  
“ eddying seas. To such a well-intentioned man will  
“ it be granted that he shall get through the rush  
300 “ of battle whole.”

(301—319) *The troop go on their way, their armour glistening in the sun, with boar-images conspicuous on their helmets. Eagerly they advance, until the Hall comes in sight. The coast-guard points it out to them, commends them to God, and departs.*

They set out then to journey on;—the vessel remained still, the roomy-breasted ship rode on the painter, held by its anchor. Above the cheek-guards shone the boar-images; covered with gold, adorned  
305 and fire-hardened, the boar held ward. The men hastened; bent on the fray, they pushed along; they went down hill together, until they could descry the timbered hall, handsome and gold-adorned, which was for earth-dwellers the most pre-eminent  
310 of buildings under heaven;—in which the Ruler dwelt,—its radiance gleamed o’er many lands. Then did the bold in battle point them out the radiant dwelling of brave men, that they might go

315 straight thither. War hero as he was, he headed his horse round, and then he spake this word:—"It is "time for me to depart. May the Almighty Father "keep you safe in your adventures by His grace. I "will to the sea, to keep ward against hostile bands."

## V

## BEOWULF AND WULFGAR

[Lines 320—370]

*(320—331) Arrived at the Hall, they pile arms and sit down.*

320 The road was paved, the path kept the men together. When they went thence to the Hall in their dread armour, each corslet, hard and hand-locked, glistened, each gleaming ring of iron chinked  
325 in their harness. Sea-weary, they put their broad shields, their trusty bucklers wondrous hard, against the palace wall; then seated they themselves upon the bench; the corslets, war-dress of the heroes, rang; the spears were piled together, the war-gear of the sea-men,—the ashen wood, grey at the tip. The  
330 iron-clad troop was well supplied with weapons.

*(331—339) Wulfgar, lord of the Wendels and herald of King Hrothgar, asks whence the strangers have come. He admires their war-gear and concludes that they have visited Hrothgar, not as fugitives and exiles, but for some brave purpose.*

There, then, a stately warrior asked the troopers of their race:—"Whence have ye brought these

335 “plated shields, these hauberks gray and visored  
 “helmets, this pile of battle-shafts. I am Hrothgar’s  
 “herald and officer. I have never seen so many  
 “foreigners more bold. I ween you have sought  
 “out Hrothgar, not from exile, but from valour and  
 “from loftiness of soul!”

*(340—347) In reply Beowulf gives his name; says that he and his fellows are from Hygelac’s court, and asks leave to tell his errand to Hrothgar in person.*

340 Then the (hero) renowned in strength answered  
 him; the proud leader of the Weders, hardy under  
 his helmet, rejoined in speech: “We are Hygelac’s  
 “table companions. Beowulf is my name. I wish  
 “to tell my errand to the son of Healfdene, the  
 345 “famous prince thy master, if he will grant us  
 “that we may speak with his gracious self.”

*(348—355) Wulfgar promises to report this request to Hrothgar and to bring back his answer.*

Wulfgar replied (he was a chief of the Wendels;  
 his courage, powers and wisdom were well-known  
 350 to many): “I will ask the Protector of the Danes,  
 “the Lord of the Scyldings and giver of rings, the  
 “illustrious prince, as thou makest request, concern-  
 “ing thy expedition, and will forthwith announce  
 “to thee the answer which the prince thinks fit to  
 355 “give me.”

*(356—370) Quickly he goes into the presence of*

*his lord, announces the coming of Beowulf and his friends, says they wish for an interview, and begs that it may be granted, being much impressed by the noble bearing of the party.*

Then he returned quickly to where Hrothgar sat, old and hoary, with his suite of nobles; the valiant one went on until he stood before the shoulders of the Danish lord,—he knew the etiquette  
 360 of court. Wulfgar spoke to his beloved lord:  
 “People of the Geats, come from far, over the seas,  
 “have voyaged hither; the warriors call their chief  
 “Beowulf. They make request that they may now  
 365 “exchange words with thee, my Ruler. Refuse them  
 “not thy conversation, gracious Hrothgar! In their  
 “war-trappings they seem worthy of the high esteem  
 “of nobles. Assuredly the chief is doughty who  
 370 “has led these battle heroes hither.”

## VI

## HROTHGAR'S WELCOME

[Lines 371—455]

*(371—389) Hrothgar recollects Beowulf as a youth, speaks of his parentage and says that a certain embassy from the Danes to the Geats once brought back tidings of his tremendous strength. He surmises that the men have come to help him against Grendel, and tells Wulfgar to bid them welcome and bring them in.*

Hrothgar, the Scyldings' shield, replied: “I knew  
 “him when he was a youth. His ancestor was

375 "called Ecgtheow; Hretel the Geat gave him his  
 "only daughter into his household; his son has now  
 "come boldly here, and visited a trusty friend.  
 "Moreover, sea-farers, who carried thither costly  
 "presents for the goodwill of the Geats used to say  
 380 "this—that he the famed in battle, had in his grip  
 "of hand the force of thirty men. The holy God  
 "has sent him to us West-Danes, as I hope, for a  
 "support against the plague of Grendel. I shall  
 385 "proffer the chieftain treasures for his bravery.  
 "Do thou make haste; bid thou the banded brother-  
 "hood come in together for me to see. Tell them  
 "besides in words that they are welcome to the  
 "Danish people."

*(389—398) Wulfgar accordingly invites the Geats into the presence of his lord. They are allowed to come in in helm and corslet, but leave their shields and spears behind.*

390 Then to the hall-door Wulfgar went, brought  
 word within: "My conquering lord, chief of the  
 "Eastern Danes, bade me inform you that he knows  
 "your noble blood, and that ye men of brave intent  
 "are welcome to him hither over the sea-billows.  
 395 "Now may ye go and see Hrothgar in your fighting  
 "raiment, under your war-masks; let your battle-  
 "shields and your wooden spear-shafts await here  
 "the issue of the parley."

*(399--404) So Beowulf and his comrades go in, except two or three who are left behind to guard the weapons. Beowulf himself steps into the Hall.*

Then the chieftain rose with many a warrior  
 400 round him,—a picked band of followers; some  
 waited there and guarded the accoutrements, as  
 the brave man directed them. Together they hied  
 them forward under the roof of Heorot, as the man  
 guided them. The valiant one advanced, hardy  
 under his helmet, until he stood within the chamber.

*(405—426) He greets Hrothgar, says he has  
 heard of Grendel's evil doings, and has been coun-  
 selled by his countrymen, familiar with his past  
 exploits, to offer Hrothgar his services. Now he  
 is ready to tackle the monster single-handed.*

405 Beowulf spake, the corslet on him shone, the  
 armour-net linked by the skill of the smith: “Hail  
 “to thee, Hrothgar! I am Hygelac’s kinsman and  
 “tribesman-thane. I have in my youth undertaken  
 “many deeds of daring. Grendel’s doings became  
 410 “plainly known to me in my fatherland. Sea-farers  
 “say that this hall, this most noble building, stands  
 “empty and useless to every man after the evening  
 “light has become hidden under the vault of heaven.  
 415 “Then my people, the best folk, wise men, ad-  
 “vised me thus, lord Hrothgar,—that I should visit  
 “thee, because they knew the hugeness of my power;  
 “they had themselves observed, when, bloodstained  
 “from the foes, I passed through hostile snares, where  
 420 “I bound five, laid low a brood of giants and slew  
 “by night sea-monsters on the waves; I suffered  
 “dire extremity, and avenged the attacks upon  
 “the Weder Geats—disasters had befallen them—I  
 “ground down their oppressors. And now I will

“decide the matter alone against the wretch, the  
“giant, Grendel!”

*(426—440) As they have come all this way on purpose, he hopes Hrothgar will not deny his party the honour of purging Heorot. For himself, he engages—like an officer and a gentleman—to renounce his weapons—his sword, his shield of lindenbark—in that the foe has none, and he will not take a mean advantage.*

“Now therefore I will beg of thee one boon,  
“thou Ruler of the glorious Danes, protector of the  
“Scyldings. Do not refuse me this, defence of  
“warriors, nation’s kindly Ruler, now I am come thus  
“far;—that I alone, with my band of noble warriors,  
“this troop of hardy men, may purge Heorot.  
“Moreover, I have learnt that in his rashness the  
“monster reckes not of weapons. Hence—so that  
“Hygelac, my prince, may be glad at heart on my  
“account, I renounce this—that I should bear a  
“sword, or ample shield, or yellow buckler to the  
“fray; but with the fiend I’ll close with grip of  
“hand, and struggle about life, foe against foe.”

*(440—455) The fighting shall be fair, and then the vanquished will feel that it is God’s judgment. He well knows that he must conquer, or die a ghastly death. If the latter is his fate, he begs that his coat of mail may go to Hygelac. What must be, must!*

“He whom death carries off shall rest assured it

“is God’s will. I doubt it not that if he may pre-  
 “vail, he will eat fearlessly the Geatish folk in the  
 445 “war-hall, as he has often done the flower of the  
 “Hrethmen.

“Thou wilt have no need to cover my head, for  
 “he will have me, blood-bespattered, if death seizes  
 “me. He will bear off the bloody corpse, will set  
 “his mind upon devouring it. The lonely one will  
 450 “feast unpityingly, and stain his swamp-lair;—no  
 “longer wilt thou need to care about my body’s  
 “sustenance. If battle takes me, do thou send Hygelac  
 “this best of war-dresses, most excellent of corslets,  
 “which protects my breast; it is Hrethel’s legacy,  
 455 “the work of Weland. Wyrð goes ever as it must!”

## VII

## HROTHGAR TELLS OF GRENDEL

[Lines 456—498]

(456—472) *Hrothgar recognises the good intentions of the Geats. He refers to Ecgtheow’s history—how he slew a Wylfing chief, and his own people, fearing reprisals, would not have him back in Geatland. So he went to Denmark and took refuge at the court of Hrothgar, then a young man. The latter gave presents to the Wylfings and so ended the feud, and Ecgtheow, out of gratitude, swore fealty to him. (This episode may be inserted to explain why it is natural that Ecgtheow’s son Beowulf should now do Hrothgar a good turn.)*

Then Hrothgar, protector of the Scyldings, spake:  
 “My friend Beowulf, thou hast sought us for



“defensive fight, and for kindly help. Thy father  
 “fought a mighty battle; he was the hand-slayer of  
 460 “Heatholaf among the Wylfings; then the people  
 “of the Weder Geats might not harbour him, from  
 “fear of harrings. Thence went he to the South  
 “Danes’ folk, the honoured Scyldings, over the surg-  
 “ing of the waves; when I first ruled the people  
 465 “of the Danes, held in my younger days the gem-  
 “decked treasure-burg of heroes, when Heregar, my  
 “elder brother, the son of Healfdene, was dead and  
 “lifeless. He was better than I! I settled after-  
 470 “wards the feud with money. I sent old treasures  
 “over the seas back to the Wylfings. He swore  
 “oaths to me.”

*(473—479) No one can tell what havoc Grendel has wrought. Yet God can put an end to it.*

“It is a grief to me in my soul to tell any man  
 “what Grendel with his thoughts of hate has framed  
 475 “for me in Heorot of harm and sudden harassings.  
 “My chamber-guard, my war-band is diminished.  
 “Fate (Wyrd) swept them off into the awful pres-  
 “ence of Grendel. Still, God can easily restrain  
 “the mad ravager from his deeds!”

*(480—490) Often men-at-arms, inspirited by drink, pledged themselves to wait for Grendel in the Hall. Next morning they were gone, their blood stained the chamber-floor! He ends with an invitation to the banquet, at which Beowulf may talk freely, without fear of treachery.*

480 "Full often fighting men elate with beer, pledged  
 "themselves over the ale-cup, that they would await  
 "in the beer-hall the combat with Grendel with  
 "terrible swords. Then at morning-time, when day  
 485 "shone forth, was this mead-hall, this noble chamber,  
 "stained with gore; all the bench-boards deluged  
 "with blood, the hall with sword-blood. Through  
 "that I possessed the fewer trusty followers, dear  
 "warriors, by those whom death took off. Sit now  
 "at the banquet and open thy mind, thy war-fame  
 490 "unto men, as inclination moves thee."

*(491—498) Soon the ale-flagon was passed round  
 and the minstrel sang,—Danes and Geats held  
 revel together.*

Then a bench was cleared in the beer-hall for  
 the Geat-men, all together; thither went the bold  
 ones to sit, exulting in strength. A servant did  
 495 his office, who bare in his hands an overlaid ale-  
 cup, and poured out the pure liquor. Now and  
 again a minstrel sang, clear-voiced in Heorot.  
 There was revelry among the heroes,—no slight  
 joy of Danes and Weders.

## VIII

### UNFERTH TAUNTS BEOWULF BEOWULF'S CONTEST WITH BRECA

[Lines 499—558]

*(499—505) Now comes a jarring note. Unferth,  
 a Danish courtier, is devoured by jealousy, and  
 taunts Beowulf.*

500 Then Unferth, the son of Ecglaf, who sat at the feet of the lord of the Scyldings, spoke, and gave vent to secret thoughts of strife,—the journey of Beowulf, the brave sea-farer, was a great chagrin to him, for he grudged that any other man under heaven should ever obtain more glory on this  
505 middle-earth than he himself.

(506—528) *“Art thou the same Beowulf,” says he, “who ventured on a foolhardy swimming match “with Breca on the open sea in winter, for seven “days, and got beaten? A worse fate is in store “for thee when thou meetest Grendel!”*

“Art thou that Beowulf who strove with Breca, “contested with him on the open sea, in a swim-  
“ming contest, when ye two for vainglory tried the  
“floods, and ventured your lives in deep water for  
510 “idle boasting? Nor could any man, friend or foe,  
“dissuade you from your sorry enterprise when ye  
“swam on the sea; when ye compassed the flowing  
“stream with your arms, meted out the sea-paths,  
515 “battled with your hands, and glided over the ocean;  
“when the sea, the winter’s flood, surged with  
“waves. Ye two toiled in the water’s realm seven  
“nights; he overcame you at swimming, he had  
“the greater strength. Then, at morning time, the  
“ocean cast him up on the Heathoraemas’ land.  
520 “Thence, dear to his people, he sought his beloved  
“fatherland, the land of the Brondings, his fair strong-  
“hold-city, where he had subjects and treasures  
“and a borough. The son of Beanstan performed  
“faithfully all that he had pledged himself to. So

525 "I expect for thee a worse fatality,—though thou  
 "hast everywhere prevailed in rush of battle,—  
 "gruesome war,—if thou darest await Grendel at  
 "close quarters for the space of a night."

*(529—558) Beowulf replies with much warmth, and gives his own version of the story about Breca. He and Breca, when young men, dared each other to a swimming match on the sea, each taking a naked sword with which to keep off the whales. They held together for five days, till cold and darkness and the high wind drove them apart. Sea monsters came near, one of whom attacked Beowulf and dragged him down. He was, however, protected by his armour, and despatched the beast.*

530 Beowulf, son of Ecgtheow, replied: "Well, my  
 "friend Unferth, thou hast talked a great deal,  
 "drunken with beer, concerning Breca, and hast  
 "said much about his adventure! In sooth I tell it  
 "out that I had more strength at sea, more battling  
 "with waves, than any other man.

535 "When we were subalterns, we two said this,  
 "and pledged ourselves,—we were both then still  
 "in the time of youth—that we would venture our  
 "lives out on the sea, and that we did, accordingly.  
 "When we swam on the sea we had a naked sword,  
 540 "rigid in hand;—we thought to guard ourselves  
 "against whales. He could not by any means float  
 "far from me on the flood-waves, swifter on the  
 "sea than I;—I would not go from him. Thus we  
 "two were together on the sea for the space of five

“nights, till the flood, the tossing seas, the bitter-  
 545 “cold weather, the darkening night, drove us apart,  
 “and the fierce north wind turned on us,—rough  
 “were the waves. The wrath of the sea-fishes was  
 “aroused; then my corslet, hard and hand-locked,  
 550 “furnished me help against the foes; the woven  
 “shirt of mail, adorned with gold, covered my breast.  
 “A spotted deadly brute dragged me to the bottom,  
 555 “the grim beast had me fast in his grip; still, it  
 “was granted to me that I might strike the monster  
 “with my sword-point, with my fighting weapon;  
 “the force of battle carried off the sea beast by  
 “my hand.”

## IX

## BEOWULF'S CONTEST WITH BRECA CONTINUED

## THE FEAST

[Lines 559—661]

*(559—581) More of the sea-fiends came on. Beowulf laid about him with sword and killed nine of them. Their mutilated corpses strewed the shore. Then the sun rose and Beowulf could see the land. There never was a tougher struggle; but fortune often favours the brave, and Beowulf lived through it, and was at last landed by the current on the shore of the Finns' country, exhausted, but with a whole skin.*

560 “Thus did the miscreants press me hard and often.  
 “With my dear sword I served them out, as was  
 “befitting. The base destroyers did not have the

“pleasure of that feast,—that they might eat me,— sit  
 565 “round the banquet at the sea-bottom; but at morn-  
 “ing they lay wounded by cutlasses, up along the  
 “foreshore—despatched by swords—so that hence-  
 “forth, they could not hinder sea-farers of their  
 “passage over the deep water-way. The sun,  
 570 “bright beacon of God, came from the east; the  
 “waters assuaged, so that I could descry sea-head-  
 “lands, weather-beaten cliffs. Often Wyrð saves an  
 “undoomed earl, when his courage is good! Well,  
 “it was granted me to slay nine sea-monsters with  
 575 “my sword! Never have I been told of harder  
 “struggle at night under the vault of heaven, nor  
 “of a man in greater straits on ocean streams. Yet I  
 “endured the grip of the monsters with my life whole,  
 “weary of my enterprise. Then the sea bore me,  
 580 “the flood, by its current, the surging ocean, to the  
 “land of the Finns.”

*(581—601) “I have never,” adds Beowulf, “heard  
 “any such like exploit told about you, Unferth!  
 “Neither you nor Breca are equal to it. It is true  
 “you did kill your own brothers; but you will have  
 “to suffer for that in hell, clever as you are. The  
 “fact is, Grendel would never have wrought such  
 “mischief if you and your Danish comrades had not  
 “been such cowards. As it is, he does what he  
 “likes, and doesn’t care a straw for your warlike  
 “Danes.”*

“I have never heard such contests, such peril of  
 “swords related about THEE. Never yet did Breca  
 585 “at the battle play, nor either of you, perform so

"bold a deed with shining swords . . . I do not  
 "boast much of that; though thou wast the slaught-  
 "erer of thy brothers—thy blood relations; for that  
 "thou shalt bear punishment in hell, good though  
 590 "thy wit may be. In truth I tell thee, son of Ecglaf,  
 "that Grendel, the frightful demon, would never  
 "have done so many dread deeds to thy prince,  
 "such havoc in Heorot, if thy heart, thy spirit,  
 "were so warlike as thou sayest thyself. But he  
 595 "has found out that he need not too much dread  
 "the antagonism, the terrible sword-storm of your  
 "men, the Victor-Scyldings. He takes pledges by  
 "force, spares none of the Danish people; but he  
 600 "fights for amusement, kills and feasts, and recks  
 "not of the opposition of the Spear-Danes."

(601—606) *"Now I am going to show him what  
 "Geatish pluck is like—and to-morrow every one  
 "will be able to drink his mead in peace!"*

"Now, however, I shall quickly show him the  
 "strength and courage of the Geats in battle. After-  
 "wards—when the morning-light of another day,  
 605 "the ether-clad sun, shines from the South over the  
 "sons of men—let him who may go boldly to the  
 "mead-drinking!"

(607—610) *Hrothgar, far from being insulted  
 at the reflections on his men, rejoices at the pro-  
 spect of help.*

Then the distributor of treasure, gray-haired and  
 famed in battle, was in joyful mood; the prince

of the Glorious Danes counted on help; the  
shepherd of the people heard from Beowulf his  
610 firm resolve.

*(611—628) The revelry proceeds. Wealhtheow, the queen consort, goes forth and courteously greets the guests. After offering the cup to Hrothgar, she goes round the Hall with it, handing it to the older and the younger men-at-arms in turn. At last she comes to Beowulf, and thanks God that she may look to him for help against the national scourge.*

There was laughter of warriors, song sounded forth, the words were joyous. Wealhtheow, Hrothgar's queen, went forth, mindful of court usage,  
615 and greeted, gold-adorned, the men in hall. The noble lady first gave the cup to the hereditary ruler of the East-Danes, and bade him be joyful at the beer-drinking, lovable to his people. He, the victorious king, partook in gladness of the feast and hall-cup.

620 Then the lady of the Helmings went round every part of the hall, to seniors and juniors; proffered the costly goblet; until occasion came that she, the diademed queen, ripe in judgment, bore  
625 the mead-cup to Beowulf. She greeted the prince of the Geats, and thanked God, discreet in speech, in that her desire had been fulfilled, that she might look to some warrior for help from these attacks.

*(628—641) Beowulf replies that he will conquer or die, much to the delight of Wealhtheow, who goes back to sit by the side of the king.*



He, the death-dealing fighter, received the cup  
 630 from Wealhtheow, and then spoke, eager for the  
 fray. Beowulf, son of Ecgtheow, said:—

“When I went on the sea and sat in the sea-  
 “boat with my company of men, I purposed this:—  
 “that I would once for all carry out the wish of  
 635 “your people, or fall in the field, fast in the clutches  
 “of the foe! I will show knightly courage, or in  
 “this mead-hall pass my latest day!”

These words the lady liked full well,—the Geat’s  
 640 defiant speech; the free-born folk-queen, gold-be-  
 decked, went by her lord to sit.

*(642—651) The old spirit of blitheness comes  
 back to the hall-frequenters; but it is late, and  
 Hrothgar, with a foreboding of evil, proposes to  
 retire to rest.*

Then again, as of yore, brave words were spoken  
 in the hall, the people were in gladness, there  
 was the clamour of a conquering tribe; until  
 645 straightway the son of Healfdene wished to go to  
 his evening-rest; he knew that an attack was pur-  
 posed against the high Hall by the evil spirit,  
 when they could not see the sun’s light, and dark-  
 650 ening night was over all,—when shapes of dark  
 envelopment came stalking, dusky beneath the  
 clouds.

*(651—661) The company rises. Hrothgar wishes  
 Beowulf good luck, entrusts Heorot to his keeping,  
 and promises him ample recompense if his under-  
 taking is successful.*

The whole company rose. Then Hrothgar saluted Beowulf—one hero the other—and wished him luck, power in the house of wine, and said these words:

655 “Never yet have I entrusted the noble hall of  
 “the Danes to any man, since I could lift hand  
 “and shield, excepting now to thee. Occupy now  
 “and guard this best of houses, be mindful of thy  
 “fame, make known thy mighty valour, watch against  
 660 “the foe. No lack shall be to thee of what thou  
 “wilt, if thou dost get through this daring business  
 “with thy life.”

## X

## THE WATCH FOR GRENDEL

[Lines 662—709]

*(662—668) So Hrothgar retires with his suite, and it becomes known that he has left Heorot in charge of a newly appointed warden.*

Then Hrothgar, bulwark of the Scyldings, departed out of the Hall with his suite of warriors. The war-chief wished to join Wealhtheow, his queen, as  
 665 consort. The King of Glory had, so men had heard, appointed a hall-guard against Grendel, who discharged a special office about the Lord of the Danes,—kept watch for monsters.

*(669—674) Beowulf strips himself of his armour and trusts in his sheer strength, and the favour of God.*

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Verily the chief of the Geats trusted firmly in  
 670 his fervid might, and in the favour of the Creator,  
 when he took off from himself the iron corslet, and  
 the helmet from his head, and gave his figured  
 sword, choicest of weapons, to his thane, and bade  
 him guard the war-harness!

*(675—687) Boastfully does he lay stress on his  
 intention to meet Grendel without a sword, so that  
 there shall be a fair fight and God shall judge.*

675 Then spake brave Beowulf of the Geats a boast-  
 ful word, ere he went up to bed: "I count my-  
 "self no less in fighting power, in battle-deeds, than  
 "Grendel, and therefore by the sword I will not  
 680 "kill him,—rid him of life,—though I might rightly  
 "do so. He knoweth not of these noble arts—to  
 "strike back at me and hew my shield, brave though  
 "he be at feats of brutal force. But we at night  
 "shall dispense with the sword, if he dare seek a  
 685 "combat without arms; and then may the wise God,  
 "the holy Lord, adjudge the victory to whichever  
 "side it seemeth meet to him!"

*(688—702) Then he and his comrades lay them-  
 selves down to sleep—the latter with little hope of  
 ever seeing home again. Yet God, who rules over  
 all, was to give them victory over their enemies  
 through the might of their leader.*

Then the brave-in-battle laid him down, the  
 pillow received the impress of the noble's face,  
 690 and around him many a keen sea-warrior sank

upon the chamber-couch. Not one of them supposed that thence he would ever revisit his sweet home, his folk and the castle in which he was brought up; nay, they had learned that in  
 695 time past murderous death had taken off far too many of them, the Danish people, in the wine-hall. But to them, the people of the Weder-Geats, the Lord gave weavèd fortune of success in war,—help and support, so that they should all overcome their enemies through the power of one man, through  
 700 his personal strength. It is known for certain that the mighty God has always ruled over the race of men.

*(702—709) In the gloom of night came Grendel. Beowulf alone was awake, and although it was notorious that the monster could do nothing without the sufferance of God, he is seized by violent emotion.*

The shadowy visitant came stalking in the dusky night. The warriors who had to guard that pin-  
 705 naced hall slept,—all except one. It was well-known to men that the worker of ill might not hurl them to the shades below when the Creator did not will it. Still, he, defiantly watching for the foe, awaited in swelling rage the issue of the combat.

## XI

### GRENDel'S RAID

[Lines 710—791]

*(710—724) The accursed spirit reconnoitres, bursts*

*open the door in a rage and advances through the Hall.*

710 Then came Grendel, advancing from the moor under the misty slopes; God's anger rested on him. The deadly foe thought to entrap one of the human race in the high Hall; he strode beneath the clouds in such wise that he might best discern  
715 the wine-building, the gold-chamber of men, plated over with decorations. Nor was that the first time that he had visited Hrothgar's home. Never in the days of his life, before or since, did he discover a braver warrior and hall-guards.

720 So this creature, deprived of joys, came journeying to the hall. The door, fastened by forged bands, opened straightway, when he touched it with his hands. Thus, bent on destruction, for he was swollen with rage, he burst open the entrance of the building.

*(724—745) He revels in the thought of a feast of human flesh, and, anxiously watched by Beowulf, seizes and devours a sleeping Geat.*

725 Quickly, after that, the fiend stepped on to the chequered floor,—advanced in angry mood; out of his eyes there started a weird light, most like a flame. He saw many men in the hall, a troop of kinsmen, a band of warriors, sleeping all together.  
730 Then his spirit exulted, he, the cruel monster, resolved that he would sever the soul of every one of them from his body before day came; for the hope of feasting full had come to him. That was no longer his fortune, that he should devour more

735 of the human race after that night. The mighty  
 relative of Hygelac kept watching how the  
 murderous foe would set to work with his sudden  
 snatchings. The monster was not minded to put it  
 740 off, but quickly grasped a sleeping warrior as a first  
 start, rent him undisturbed, bit his bony frame,  
 drank blood in streams, swallowed bite after bite,  
 and soon he had eaten up all of the dead man,  
 745 (even) his feet and hands.

*(745—766) Then he rushes on Beowulf, who at  
 once closes with him and holds him tight, with his  
 mighty grip. Thoroughly affrighted, the monster  
 tries to escape, but in vain!*

Forward and nearer he advanced, and then seized  
 with his hands the doughty warrior—the fiend  
 reached out towards him with his claw. He (Beowulf)  
 at once took in his evil plans, and came down on  
 750 his (Grendel's) arm. Instantly the master of crimes  
 realised that never in this middle-world, these regions  
 of earth, had he met with a mightier hand-grip in  
 any other man. He became affrighted in soul and  
 spirit, but he could get away no faster for all that.  
 755 His mind was bent on getting off,—he wished to  
 flee into the darkness and go back to the herd of  
 devils. His case was unlike anything he had met  
 with in his lifetime there before. Then Hygelac's  
 brave kinsman was mindful of his evening speech;  
 760 he stood erect and grasped him tight,—his fingers  
 cracked. The monster was moving out; the chief  
 stepped forward too. The infamous creature thought  
 to slip further off, wheresoever he could, and to

flee away thence to his fen-refuge; he knew the power of his fingers was in the foeman's grip. That  
765 was a dire journey which the baleful fiend had made to Heorot!

*(767—782) The building rings with their furious struggles, and is only kept from tumbling down by its substantial build, its extraordinary strength. The mead-benches were wrenched from the walls; but no one could destroy that massive building; fire alone could consume it.*

The splendid hall resounded, there was panic among all the Danes, the castle-dwellers, and among the heroes and the nobles every one. Both the mighty  
770 wardens were furious; the building rang again. Then was it a great wonder that the wine-hall was proof against the savage fighters,—that the fair earthly dwelling did not fall to the ground; yet it was  
(made) firm enough for it, inside and out, by means  
775 of iron clamps, forged with curious art. There, where the foemen fought, many a mead-bench adorned with gilding, started from the sill, as I have heard. Before that, veterans of the Scyldings  
780 never weened that any man could shatter it, splendid and horn-bedecked, by might, or loosen it by craft, although the embrace of fire might swallow it in smoke.

*(782—790) Grendel gives forth a great shriek of despair, which strikes awe into the Danes on the neighbouring castle wall.*

A sound arose, startling enough; a horrible fear  
 785 clung to the North Danes, to every one who heard  
 the shrieking from the wall,—(heard) the adversary  
 of God chant his grisly lay, his song of non-success,—  
 the prisoner of hell wailing over his wound. He  
 790 held him fast who was strongest of men in might  
 in this life's day!

## XII

## BEOWULF TEARS OFF GRENDEL'S ARM

[Lines 791—836]

*(791—805) Still Beowulf holds him tight. His  
 comrades come to his help with their swords, but  
 the monster is proof against all such weapons.*

The defender of nobles would not by any means  
 let the murderous visitor escape alive,—he did not  
 count his (Grendel's) life(-days) of use to any of  
 795 the peoples. There many a noble of Beowulf's  
 company brandished an old ancestral weapon—  
 they wished to protect the life of their lord, of  
 their famous chief, if so be they might. They did  
 not know, brave-minded men of war, when they  
 800 took part in the contest, and thought to hew him  
 on every side, and hunt out his life, that no war-  
 bill on earth, no best of sabres, could get at the  
 ceaseless foe, for that he used enchantment against  
 805 conquering weapons, every sort of blades.

*(805—824) Though the evil spirit was clothed  
 in flesh, that was no help to him. The hated foe  
 holds him fast, his arm gives way at the shoulder,*



*the sinews part—he flees away to die, leaving his limb behind him.*

In the time of this life his breaking up was to be pitiable—the alien spirit was to journey far into the power of fiends. Then he who of yore had  
 810 in wantonness of soul done many outrages to mankind, he, the rebel against God, discovered this—that his bodily frame was no help to him, but that the bold kinsman of Hygelac had him by the hands.  
 815 While he lived, each was abhorrent to the other. The horrible wretch suffered deadly hurt, on his shoulder gaped a wound past remedy, the sinews sprang asunder—the fleshy covering burst. Glory in fight was granted to Beowulf; Grendel, sick to  
 820 death, must needs flee thence under the fen-fastnesses—seek out his joyless dwelling;—he knew too well that the end of his life had come, the [daily-]number of his days. After that bloody contest, the desire of all the Danes had come to pass!

*(825—836) Thus did Beowulf fulfil his boast,—free Heorot from its nightly pest, and end the troubles of the Danes. As proof of victory, there was Grendel's hand and arm and shoulder in the Hall.*

825 In such wise did he who first came from far, the wise and brave, purge Hrothgar's Hall, and free it from attack. He rejoiced in his night's work, in his heroic deeds. The chief of the Geatish men had made good his boast to the East Danes, and

830 removed besides all the trouble, the carking care,  
 which erewhile they had endured, and had to  
 undergo from dire compulsion, no small humiliation.  
 That was clear evidence, when the brave warrior  
 deposited by the spacious roof the hand, the arm  
 835 and shoulder—there was Grendel's clutching-limb  
 all complete!

## XIII

## THE JOY AT HEOROT

[Lines 837—924]

*(837—852) People came from far and near to  
 see Grendel's arm at Heorot, and rejoiced greatly.  
 The mere, his retreat in the neighbouring fen-country,  
 was dyed with blood from the doomed creature, who  
 took refuge in it. There he passed away and hell  
 received him.*

Then, in the morning, as I have heard, there  
 was many a warrior round the gift-hall, chiefs of  
 840 the folk came from far and near along the high-  
 ways to see the marvel,—the traces of the monster.  
 His parting from life did not seem a cause for  
 sorrow to any of the men who saw the trail of the  
 inglorious one,—how he, weary in spirit and van-  
 845 quished in the fight, made tracks for his life,  
 away from thence, death-doomed and fugitive, to the  
 lake of the water-demons. Then the water was  
 boiling with blood, the frightful surge of the waves  
 welled up, all mingled with hot gore,—with sword-  
 850 blood; the death-doomed dyed it, and then, deprived  
 of joys, he laid life down,—his heathen soul in  
 the fen-refuge; there Hell received him!

(853—863) *Those of the courtiers who had gone to the mere to see the strange sight, rode back boldly, praising Beowulf's great feat so far as they could without being disloyal to Hrothgar, their respected king.*

855 Thence the older courtiers turned back, and many a young (man) from the joyous journey, to ride boldly from the mere on horses—warriors on steeds. Then Beowulf's exploit was proclaimed—many said repeatedly that no other man, South or North, between the seas, the wide world over, was more  
860 excellent among shield-bearers under the expanse of heaven, (or) worthier of empire. Yet did they not at all decry their friend and lord, the gracious Hrothgar; he was their good king still.

(864—874) *On the way they raced their horses, and a thane of the company began to compose a lay about Beowulf.*

865 Now and then the famous warriors let their bay horses gallop,—run on in races, where the country tracks seemed suitable,—excellent in repute.

870 Bit by bit a thane of the king, a vaunt-laden fellow exercised in lays, who recollected countless old traditions, framed a new story, founded upon fact;—the man began to produce with skill the deed of Beowulf, and fluently to utter clever phrases,—to link words together.

## EPISODE OF SIGEMUND THE VOLSING.

*(874—884) The minstrel tells of the wanderings and adventures of Sigemund, the son of Waels, who, with his nephew Fitela, had slain many monsters. (The fact that Beowulf was also a monster-killer may have suggested the subject to the minstrel.)*

875 He related everything that he had heard men say of Sigemund, his deeds of valour, many untold things, the struggle of the son of Waels, his wanderings far and wide, the feuds and treacheries—things that the sons of men knew nothing of save Fitela (who was)  
880 with him, when he, the uncle, would tell something of such a matter to his nephew, as they had always been friends in need in every struggle, and had felled with their swords large numbers of the race of monsters.

*(884—900) Sigemund gained especial note after his death for killing with his sword a dragon, the guardian of a hoard of treasure, and taking the booty off in a ship.*

885 There arose no little fame to Sigemund after his death-day, since he, hardy in battle, had killed the dragon, keeper of the hoard. Under the grey rock he, son of a prince, ventured the perilous deed alone,—Fitela was not with him.

890 Yet it befell him that the sword pierced through the wondrous snake, so that it, the sterling blade, stuck in the rock,—the dragon died a violent death. By valour had the warrior secured that he might enjoy the ring-hoard at his own will; the son of Waels  
895 loaded a sea-boat, bare the shining treasures into the bosom of the ship. Fire consumed the dragon.

900 In deeds of bravery he was by far the most renowned of adventurers among the tribes of men, and thus he throve erewhile.

(901—915) *Heremod, a Danish king, whose connexion with Sigemund is not clear, causes much trouble to his people by his behaviour, and at last dies by treachery.*

After Heremod's warring-time had slackened off, his power and daring, he among the Eotens was betrayed into the power of the foes, and quickly sent away. 905 Too long did the surgings of sorrow unhinge him;—to his people, all the nobles, he was a care for life. Besides, often in times gone by, many a wise vassal had bewailed the daring man's adventure, (many a one) who hoped in him as a help out of misfortunes, 910 —that that royal child might prosper, attain his father's rank, rule over people, citadel and treasure, the realm of heroes, the Scyldings' fatherland. In that respect the kinsman of Hygelac was more popular with all 915 mankind, and with his friends than he; treachery befell him.

(916—924) *Thus they journeyed home, racing from time to time, till morning dawned. Many of them went back to the Hall to see the strange sight. Thither did the king and queen repair also, in state, with a great company of courtiers.*

Now and again they covered the fallow streets, racing, with their horses. Then was the morning sun urged forth and hurried on. Many a retainer, 920 valorous of mood, went to the lofty hall to see the curious wonder; the king, too, guardian of ring-hoards, (went) from his bed-chamber; he, famed for sterling qualities, advanced majestically with a great company, and his queen with him passed over the path to the mead-hall with a retinue of maidens.

## XIV

## HROTHGAR CONGRATULATES BEOWULF

[Lines 925—990]

*(925—946) Hrothgar, beholding Grendel's limb, thanks God, who has worked so great a deliverance. Only lately he had despaired, and his captains were in dismay—and now a young warrior has done the deed, whereat his mother, if she still lives, may well rejoice.*

925 Hrothgar held forth,—went to the hall, stood on  
the threshold, looked on the lofty roof, adorned with  
gold, and Grendel's hand:—"For this sight let  
"thanksgiving rise at once to the Almighty! Many  
930 "horrors and afflictions have I endured through  
"Grendel, (yet) God, the King of Glory, can ever  
"work wonder on wonder. It was but now that  
"I despaired of ever seeing a remedy for any of  
935 "my woes, since the best of houses stood stained  
"with the blood of battle,—besprent with gore. Woe  
"had scattered far and wide every one of the coun-  
"sellors, of those who never thought that they should  
"save the national monument of this people from  
940 "ogres, from monsters and from demons. Now,  
"through the might of the Lord, a subaltern has done  
"a deed which up to now we all could not accom-  
"plish by our schemings. Well! That selfsame  
945 "woman who bare this child among the tribes of  
"men may say, if she still lives, that the eternal  
"God has been gracious to her in child-bearing."

*(946—956) Henceforth Hrothgar will treat him*

*as a son,—nothing of his which Beowulf desires shall be denied him. His deeds shall give him everlasting fame.*

“Now, Beowulf, most noble hero, in my heart  
 “will I love thee as a son; henceforth ob-  
 “serve thou well this new relationship. There  
 “shall be no lack to thee of any earthly objects of  
 950 “desire of which I have control. Full oft I have  
 “assigned a recompense for less,—honour by gifts,—  
 “and to a lesser hero, a weaker in the fray. Thou  
 “hast brought to pass for thyself by thy exploits,  
 955 “that thy fame shall live for ever and ever. May  
 “the Almighty requite thee with good, as he did  
 “just now!”

*(957—979) Beowulf answered: “Yes, I did it  
 “willingly and boldly. Would that you could have  
 “witnessed it! I meant to have killed him by my  
 “grip of hand, but it was not so ordained. He left  
 “his arm behind, but the wound is a mortal one.  
 “Soon he will be before the Eternal Judge.”*

Spake Beowulf, son of Ecgtheow: “With right  
 “good will we brought that deed of daring,  
 960 “that onslaught, to fulfilment: boldly we grappled  
 “with mysterious powers. I heartily wish you could  
 “have seen him yourself, the fiend ready to faint  
 “in his trappings. I thought to pin him down to  
 “his death-bed by tight grips, so that he might  
 965 “be struggling for life by reason of my hand-grasp,  
 “unless his body had escaped. I could not keep  
 “him from going,—the Creator did not will it. I

“did not stick to him, the deadly foe, well enough  
 970 “for that,—the fiend was too preëminently strong  
 “at going. However, he left behind his hand,  
 “his arm and shoulder, to save his life and show  
 “his track. Yet the wretched being bought  
 “himself no respite thus. None the longer will the  
 975 “evil-doer live, tortured by sins; but pain has seized  
 “him tightly in its grip of force, with deadly bonds.  
 “Thus shall the crime-stained mortal wait for the Great  
 “Assize;—how the bright Deity will sentence him!”

*(980—990) Unferth, the son of Ecglaf, is the less boastful after all the nobles have seen for themselves the hand, the sword-proof claws of the monster.*

980 Then was the son of Ecglaf a man more sparing  
 of his boastful talking concerning warlike deeds,  
 after the nobles had, by the chief's prowess, gazed  
 on the hand over the lofty roof, the fingers of the  
 985 foe, each one before (himself); each place of the  
 nails, of the miscreant's claw,—the monstrous spikes  
 of the adversary,—was most like steel. Every one  
 said that there was nothing harder which could  
 bite them, (no) well-proved sword which would  
 990 sever the bloody fighting-limb of the demon.

## XV

## THE BANQUET AND THE GIFTS

[Lines 991—1049]

*(991—1002) Heorot was decorated by willing hands for a banquet, although much shattered by the fiend in his efforts to escape.*



Forthwith it was ordered that Heorot should be adorned within by hand. Many there were of men and women who prepared that festive hall, that 995 guest-chamber. The tapestries shone gold-embroidered by the walls, many wondrous sights for those among men who have an eye for such things. That radiant house, all bound within with iron bands, was greatly shattered; the door-hinges were broken, the roof alone had kept entirely sound, 000 when the demon, stained with bruises, turned and fled, despairing of life.

*(1002—1008) Death is not easy to escape from,—  
a man must go when he is fated.*

That is not easy to escape from, let him try it who will; but impelled by fate, he shall win the 005 place prepared for soul-possessors, earth-dwelling sons of men, where his body, fast in its narrow bed, shall sleep after the banquet.

*(1008—1019) Hrothgar went himself to the feast,  
which was attended by a great and joyous company.  
There was much drinking of mead, and the pro-  
ceedings were not marred by the treachery common  
in later times.*

Then was the time and tide that Healfdene's son should go into the hall; the king himself 010 would take part in the banquet. I never heard that that people bore themselves better round their treasure-giver, in a greater company. Then the prosperous (band) turned them to bench;—re-

joiced in feasting. Hrothgar and Hrothulf, their  
 1015 stout-hearted kinsmen, drank in the lofty hall many  
 a cup of mead in well-bred style. Heorot was  
 filled within with friends,—the Scyldings folk never  
 used treachery in those days.

*(1020—1034) Costly presents were bestowed on  
 Beowulf by the king—a banner, a corslet, a helmet  
 and a jewelled sword of honour.*

1020 Then the son of Healfdene bestowed on Beowulf  
 as the meed of victory a gilded ensign, a decorated  
 staff-banner, a helmet and a corslet; numbers saw  
 the jewelled sword of honour brought before the  
 1025 hero. Beowulf drank of the cup in hall; no need  
 had he to be ashamed of the costly gifts before  
 the warriors. Not many men have I known to  
 give more heartily four (such) treasures, decked  
 with gold, to others on the ale-bench.

1030 Around the helmet's crown, a projecting rim,  
 wound round with wires, kept guard outside over  
 the head, that the survivances of filing, hard in the  
 storm of battle, might not sorely injure it, what  
 time the shielded warrior must go forth against foes.

*(1035—1042) Besides these were eight horses,  
 caparisoned with gold, one being Hrothgar's own  
 charger and bearing a curious saddle.*

1035 Then the protector of nobles bade eight horses,  
 with gold-plated cheek-pieces, be brought up to  
 the Hall, within the precincts; on one of them was  
 placed a saddle cunningly inlaid, adorned with jewels,

—that was the war-seat of the mighty king, when  
 1040 Healfdene's son would take part in the play of  
 swords;—never did courage fail the far-famed chief-  
 tain at the front, when men were falling dead.

*(1043—1049) No one could say that Hrothgar  
 was niggardly with his gifts.*

And then the Ingwine's lord gave Beowulf owner-  
 1045 ship of both the two, of horses and of weapons,—  
 bade him thoroughly enjoy them. In such manly  
 wise did the renowned prince, treasure-warden of  
 heroes, pay pluck in battle back with horses and  
 with treasures, so that never man who wills to  
 speak the truth in fairness can disparage them.

## XVI and XVII

THE SONG OF HROTHGAR'S MINSTREL. THE LAY  
 OF HNAEF AND HENGEST

[Lines 1050—1191]

*(1050—1062) In addition, Hrothgar bestows  
 meet rewards on each of Beowulf's company, and  
 makes amends with gold for the loss of the man  
 whom Grendel devoured. The poet moralizes.*

1050 Besides that, the chief of the nobles bestowed  
 something precious, an heir-loom, at the mead-bench,  
 on each one of those who had traversed the sea-  
 path with Beowulf; and he bade recompense be  
 made with gold for that one whom Grendel had  
 1055 lately killed in his wickedness,—as he would have  
 (killed) more of them, had not the wise God and

the courage of the man kept off that fate. The Creator guided all the race of men, as he still does  
 1060 now. Wherefore understanding, forethought of mind, is best in every way. Much shall he experience of good and evil, who here, in these days of struggling, long makes this earth his dwelling-place.

*(1063—1067) Hrothgar's bard sings a lay to the sound of the harp.*

There was singing and music together in accom-  
 1065 paniment concerning Healfdene's warlike chieftain; the harp was played, a ballad oft rehearsed, when Hrothgar's bard was to proclaim joy in hall along the mead-bench.

EPISODE OF KING FINN

[Lines 1068—1159]

*This part of the poem is very obscure, and is rather a string of allusions than a narrative. At any rate it presupposes a knowledge on the part of the hearer of facts, which are not set out in the lay.*

*The story is apparently somewhat as follows:—*

*Finn, king of the North Frisians (Eotens) and son of Folcwalda, carries off Hildeburh, sister of Hnaef and Hengest, and daughter of Hoc, a Danish or Scylding chieftain. Hoc pursues the runaway couple and is killed.*

*Hnaef and his brother Hengest seem to have attempted to avenge their father's death by a raid into the country of the Frisians, and a desperate battle takes place, in which Hnaef and a son of Finn are killed (see line 1074).*

*After that there is a treaty of peace, which provides that as winter is coming on, Hengest and his Danish*

*followers shall be allowed to remain in the Frisian country and be treated by the king (Finn) on equal terms with his own subjects. Hengest, however, broods over the past, and is suspected of planning a revenge after the winter is over. The Frisians therefore anticipate matters by surprising Hengest and his men at night as they sleep in Hall. (This assumes the attack to be that to which the poetic fragment known as "the Fight at Finnsburg" relates; but there is another theory that it refers to the attack in which Hnaef was killed. This has the support of Grein and Bugge.) Hengest is slain by a descendant of Hunlaf, but Guthlaf and Oslaf, two of his followers, escape, to return later on, kill Finn in his own castle, and take queen Hildeburh back to her fatherland.*

1070 "Hnaef of the Scyldings, a hero of the Half-Danes,  
 "was doomed to fall in the Frisian quarrel, by the  
 "sons of Finn, when the alarm reached them. Hilde-  
 "burh, however, had no cause to praise the good  
 "faith of the Eotens; blameless herself, she was de-  
 "prived in the clash of shields of those dear to her,  
 "her sons and brother; wounded by the spear, they  
 1075 "fell one after the other; a sad princess was she! Not  
 "by any means did the daughter of Hoc mourn with-  
 "out reason over the divine decree, when morning  
 "came—when she could see in the daylight the slaugh-  
 "ter of her kinsfolk, where she formerly possessed the  
 1080 "highest earthly pleasure. Warfare took off all Finn's  
 "officers save only a few, so that he might not in any  
 "way offer battle to Hengest on that meeting-place, nor  
 "save the sad survivors from the prince's general by  
 1085 "fighting; but they (the Frisians) offered him (Hen-  
 "gest) terms, that they would give up to him entirely  
 "another hall, a chamber and a seat of honour, that  
 "they might share equal possession of it with the sons  
 "of the Eotens and that at givings out of pay the son  
 1090 "of Folcwalda (Finn) would each day bear in mind  
 "the Danes,—would gratify with rings the troop of  
 "Hengest, even with just so much costly treasure of

- "plated gold as he would cheer the Frisian race with  
 "in the beer-hall.
- 1095 "Then on both sides they ratified a treaty of fast  
 "friendship. Finn certified Hengest with oaths, abso-  
 "lutely and unreservedly, that he would treat the defeat-  
 "ed remnant honorably according to the ordinance of  
 "his counsellors; that no man there should break the  
 1100 "covenant by word or deed, nor ever violate it by  
 "treacherous art, though, being without a leader, they  
 "had followed the murderer of their ring-giver,—for it  
 "was forced upon them thus; and if any of the Frisi-  
 1105 "ans should call to mind the blood-feud by provoking  
 "words, then after that the edge of the sword should  
 "settle it. The oath was sworn, and treasure of gold  
 "was brought up from the hoard.
- "The best of the War-Scyldings, the battle-heroes,  
 "was ready at the funeral pile. At the pyre the blood-  
 1110 "stained corslet, the swine-image all-golden, the boar  
 "hard as iron, and many a noble killed by wounds,—  
 "for several had sunk in death—were visible to all.  
 "Then Hildeburh ordered her own offspring to be  
 1115 "given over to the flames, at Hnaef's funeral pile—  
 "their bodies to be burned and put upon the pyre.  
 "The unhappy woman sobbed on (his) shoulder, and  
 "lamented him in dirges. The war-hero ascended.  
 "The greatest of bale-fires curled (upwards) to the  
 1120 "clouds, roared above the grave-mound; heads were  
 "consumed, gashes gaped open: then the blood sprang  
 "forth from the body, where the foe had wounded it.  
 "The fire, greediest of spirits, had consumed all of  
 "those whom war had carried off, of either nation—  
 "their flower had passed away."

## [XVII]

- 1125 "Then the warriors, deprived of their friends, went  
 "off to visit their dwellings, to see the Frisian land, their  
 "homes and head borough. Hengest still, however,  
 "stayed with Finn the dead, forbidding winter, al-  
 "together without strife; his land was in his thoughts,

1130 "he might not guide over the sea a ring-prowed ship;  
 "the ocean heaved with storm, contended with the  
 "wind; winter locked the waves in its icy bond, until  
 "a new year came round (to men) in their habitations,  
 "as it still happens in these times, and the gloriously  
 1135 "bright weather [seasons] regularly observing their order.  
 "Then the winter was past, the bosom of the earth  
 "was fair, the wanderer, the stranger hastened from  
 "their quarters, yet he (Hengest) thought rather about  
 1140 "vengeance than sea-voyage, whether he could not  
 "bring about an altercation, that therein he might  
 "commemorate the sons of the Eotens. Hence he did  
 "not escape the fate of mortals, when the son of  
 "Hunlaf plunged into his breast the gleaming weapon,  
 "best of swords; famed among the Eotens were its  
 1145 "edges. Likewise cruel death by the sword after-  
 "wards befell the daring-minded Finn at his own  
 "home, when Guthlaf and Oslaf bemoaned the fierce  
 "onslaught after their sea-voyage,—blamed him for their  
 1150 "share of woes. His flickering spirit could not keep  
 "its footing in his breast.  
 "Then was the hall strewn with the foemen's  
 "corpses; Finn, the king, likewise, slain among his  
 "guard, and the queen taken. The bowmen of the  
 1155 "Scyldings bore to the ship all the belongings of the  
 "country's king,—whatsoever they could find at Finn's  
 "homestead of necklaces and curious gems. They  
 "brought the noble lady over the sea-path to the Danes,  
 "and led her to her people."

*(1159—1162) After the lay is ended, the rejoicings proceed.*

1160 The song was sung, the gleeman's lay. Then  
 mirth rose high, the noise of revelry was clearly  
 heard; cup-bearers proffered wine from curious  
 vessels.

(1162—1174) *Queen Wealhtheow, wearing her crown, approaches the kingly throne, where Hrothgar and his nephew Hrothulf are sitting, with Unferth at their feet. At that time the relations between uncle and nephew were cordial. She hands the cup to Hrothgar, bids him be of good cheer and gracious to the Geats.*

Then Wealhtheow came forth, to go under a golden  
 1165 diadem where the two nobles sat, uncle and nephew;  
 peace was between them still, each to the other true.  
 Moreover, there sat spokesman Unferth at the Scyl-  
 ding chieftain's feet; each of them trusted in his  
 spirit, that he had much courage, although he might  
 not have been upright with his kinsfolk at the  
 play of swords.

Then spake the Queen of the Scyldings:—  
 “Take this cup, my lord and master, dispenser of  
 1170 “treasure. Be thou of joyous mood, free-handed  
 “friend of men, and speak to the Geats with  
 “gracious words, (for) so one ought to do. Be  
 “affable towards the Geats, mindful of gifts. Now  
 “hast thou peace both far and near.”

(1175—1187) *Hearing that Hrothgar purposes to adopt Beowulf as a son, she discreetly suggests to the king to be generous to him, but to leave the kingdom to his own descendants. If he dies soon, she feels sure that Hrothulf will prove a faithful guardian to his children (Hrethric and Hrothmund), knowing what kindness he has received from the king and herself.*



175 "It has been said to me that thou wouldst have  
 "the warrior as a son. The radiant ring-hall  
 "Heorot is cleansed; dispose, while thou mayst,  
 "of many gifts, and leave the people and the  
 180 "realm to thy descendants, when thou shalt pass  
 "away into the presence of death. I know my  
 "gracious Hrothulf, that he will honourably rule  
 "his juniors, if thou, lord of the Scyldings, leavest  
 "the world sooner than he. I trust that he will  
 185 "faithfully requite our offspring, if he is mindful  
 "of all that which in the past we both did for  
 "him in his childhood for his pleasure and advance-  
 "ment."

*(1188—1191) Then she goes to where her sons  
 were sitting with Beowulf and the younger men  
 at arms.*

Then she turned to the bench where her boys  
 were,—Hrethric and Hrothmund,—and the sons of  
 the heroes, the younger warriors together, where  
 190 the brave Beowulf of the Geats sat by the brothers  
 twain.

## XVIII

## BEOWULF HONOURED WITH GIFTS

## THE HEROES REST

[Lines 1192.—1250]

*(1192—1201) The cup is borne to Beowulf and  
 he is further loaded with costly presents—gold and  
 jewels—and notably a circlet is given him than  
 which there was none better save the necklace of  
 the Brisings, which Hama carried off when he  
 fled from Eormenric.*

To him the cup was borne, and friendly invitation  
 1195 was offered in words, and twisted gold graciously  
 presented, two armlets, a mantle and rings, and the  
 finest of torques that I have ever known of in this  
 world. Never under heaven have I heard of any  
 better hoarded-gem of heroes since Hama carried  
 off to the bright castle the necklace of the Brisings,  
 1200 the ornament and casket,—he fled the snares of  
 Eormenric and chose eternal gain.

*(1202—1214) The subsequent history of the collar given to Beowulf follows,—how Hygelac, king of the Geats, wore it on his last rash and fatal expedition against the Frisians, and it passed into their possession.*

That circlet had Hygelac the Geat, the grand-  
 son of Swerting, on his last expedition, when under  
 his banner he defended the treasure,—guarded the  
 1205 spoil of battle. Fate took him off when from bravado  
 he brought trouble on himself, feud with the Fri-  
 sians. He, the mighty chieftain, bore the jewels,  
 the precious stones, across the basin of the waves;  
 he died beneath his shield. Then the body of the  
 king passed into the power of the Franks,—breast  
 1210 armour and torque as well; less able warriors plun-  
 dered those slain by the chance of battle; people  
 of the Geats occupied that place of corpses.

*(1215—1231) Wealhtheow wishes him luck of his circlet and mantle, and commends her boys to him. With her good wishes she mingles wise advice.*

The Hall was filled with (merry) noise. Wealhtheow harangued; she said before the company: "Have joy of this circlet, Beowulf, beloved youth, "with luck, and this mantle—a state treasure—and "thrive well! Be known for valour, and be kind "in counsel to these boys. For that will I be mind- "ful of largess towards thee! Thou hast brought it "to pass that men will magnify thee far and near, "to all eternity, even as widely as the sea surrounds "the windy coasts. Be, so long as thou dost live, "a prosperous prince. I wish thee store of costly "treasures. Be friendly to my son in deeds, guard- "ing his happy state. Here is each noble true to "other, in spirit mild, and faithful to his lord; the "knights are tractable, the people all at call, and "warriors primed with wine perform my bidding."

*(1232—1250) After the choice banquet was over Hrothgar went away to his palace, and the hall was cleared for sleeping. At each man's head lay his armour, as was the custom, so that they might be ready for night attacks or surprises.*

Then went she to her seat. There was the pick of banquets; men drank wine; they knew not Wyrd, grim destiny, as it had gone forth for many of the nobles.

When even had come and Hrothgar had departed to his court,—the chieftain to his rest,—un-numbered nobles watched over the Hall, as they had often done before. They cleared the bench-boards, it [the Hall] was spread about with beds and bolsters. Among the feasters one sank on

his hall-bed moribund and doomed. They set  
war-bucklers at their heads, the shining shield-wood.  
There on the bench, above each noble, was ex-  
1245 posed the helmet, prominent in war, the ringèd  
habergeon, the proud spear-shaft. It was their  
practice to be ever ready for the fray at home  
and in the field, and each of them at just such  
1250 times as need befel their lord and master. They  
were an able race !

## PART II

### BEOWULF AND GRENDEL'S MOTHER

#### XIX

##### THE ATTACK BY GRENDEL'S MOTHER

[Lines 1251—1320]

(1251—1254) *Thus they went to sleep—a sleep  
which cost one of them his life!*

And so they fell asleep. One paid a heavy price for his night's rest, as had befallen them full oft since Grendel had inhabited the gold-hall,—practised wrong, until the end came—death after his crimes.

(1255—1276) *There was a wide-spread rumour that another monster still lived, of whom Grendel was the offspring. This creature brooded over the loss of Grendel, whose origin (from Cain, cp. l. III) is again referred to, as well as his defeat by Beowulf.*

1255 It became manifest,—widely known to men,—that an avenger still lived after the monster—(lived) a long time after the sad struggle. Grendel's mother, a female harpy, brooded over her misery—she who

1260 must needs inhabit the dread waters, chilly streams,  
 after that Cain was by weapon's edge slayer of  
 his one brother,—of his father's son,—he (Cain) then  
 went forth outlawed, branded for murder, to flee  
 1265 social joy,—lodged in the wilderness. Thence arose  
 numbers of doomed creatures, of whom Grendel  
 was one, a hateful outcast-foe, who at Heorot found  
 a watchful mortal waiting for the fray. The mon-  
 ster there laid hold of him; yet he bore in mind  
 1270 the power of his might, the lavish gift which God  
 had granted him, and trusted himself to the Lord  
 for grace, help and support; hence he overcame  
 the foe, struck down the sprite of hell. Then he,  
 1275 the enemy of mankind, went off, abased, deprived  
 of joy, to see his house of death.

*(1276—1280) Grendel's mother resolves to go  
 to Heorot and avenge his death.*

And his mother, ravenous and gloomy, resolved  
 in spite of it to go a sorry journey and avenge  
 the death of her son. So she came to Heorot,  
 1280 where the Ring-Danes slept about the Hall.

*(1280—1287) Terror again seized the dwellers  
 in hall, though less than in Grendel's case, as  
 might have been expected when a woman was in  
 question.*

Then forthwith there was a reaction among the  
 nobles, when Grendel's mother thrust herself within.  
 The terror was less by just so much as woman's  
 strength, woman's war-terror is, (measured) by fight-

1285 ing-men, what time the ornamented, hammer-forgèd blade, the blood-stained sword, trusty of edge, cleaves off the boar-image prominent on the helmet.

*(1288—1291) The warriors hurriedly seize their swords—there was no time to put on armour.*

1290 Then in the hall, among the benches, the hard-edged sword was drawn; many a broad shield (was) raised, firm in the hand. When the terror seized him none thought of helm or ample corslet.

*(1292—1301) The monster snatched up one of the men—Aeschere, a high favourite of Hrothgar—and made off with him to the fens. Beowulf was not there, another sleeping-place had been assigned to him as an honour.*

1295 She was in haste,—wished to be off from thence to save her life, when she had been discovered. Quickly she grasped one of the nobles tight, and then she went towards the fen. Of champions between the seas, he was to Hrothgar most beloved in point of fellowship, a mighty shield-warrior,—a well-known hero, whom she killed upon his couch.

1300 Beowulf was not there, but before that, after the gift of treasure, another lodging-place had been allotted to the noble Geat.

*(1302—1309) A wail of anguish goes up from Heorot, and Hrothgar is again overwhelmed with grief.*

There was clamour in Heorot. She took the well-known hand (reeking) in blood; sorrow was  
 1305 reinstalled—had come (back) to the building. That was no good exchange—that they should pay on both sides with the lives of friends.

Then the old king, the hoary warrior, was sad at heart, after he knew his dearest counsellor was dead,—deprived of life.

*(1310—1320) Beowulf is hastily summoned to a council, and goes to the king's castle with his company. He asks whether the king has had a good night.*

1310 Quickly was Beowulf, victory-blest hero, summoned to the Court. With break of day the noble champion went amongst his earls, himself with comrades, where the wise (king) waited, if haply the Almighty would ever bring about a change  
 1315 for him, after the spell of woe.

Then the war-worthy man walked up the flooring with his little band,—the wood-built hall resounded—that he might greet with words the wise lord of the Ingwines,—ask if he had had a quiet  
 1320 night, according to his wish.

## XX

HROTHGAR BEWAILS THE LOSS OF AESCHERE, AND DESCRIBES THE HAUNT OF GREDEL'S MOTHER

[Lines 1321—1382]

*(1321—1344) The King tells Beowulf of the death of his dear friend Aeschere (whom he praises*



*highly) and explains in what sort it fell out. This is evidently a piece of revenge on the part of Grendel's mother.*

Hrothgar, the Scyldings' shield, replied: "Ask not  
 "thou after joy! Sorrow has reappeared for Danish  
 1325 "folk! Aeschere's dead, Yrmenlaf's elder brother,  
 "my trusted counsellor, my monitor and right-hand  
 "man, when we in battle looked after our heads,  
 "when foot-men fought and boar-crests clashed. As  
 "was Aeschere, such should a noble be, a trusty  
 1330 "peer. The wandering ogre has been his murderer  
 "by hand in Heorot. I know not whither the ghoul,  
 "proud of her carrion, took her backward way, mani-  
 "fest by her meal. She has avenged the quarrel,—  
 1335 "that thou last night didst kill Grendel in fierce  
 "fashion by tight grips, because he had reduced  
 "and killed my people. He fell in battle, for-  
 "feit of his life, and now another mighty miscreant  
 1340 "has come, and would avenge her son, and has car-  
 "ried the feud farther; which may seem a hard  
 "heart-sorrow to many a thane who mourns his  
 "treasure-giver in his mind; now does the hand lie  
 "(dead) which helped your every will."

*(1345—1376) Hrothgar, too, had heard that there were two monsters—one a female,—and in a graphic passage he describes their haunt—a gloomy mere not far distant, over which a sort of will-o'-the-wisp hovers at night. Rather than plunge into it, the hart chased by hounds will die on the shore.*

- 1345 "I have heard dwellers in the country, subjects  
 "of mine, house-holders, say this:—that they have  
 "seen two such-like huge border-haunters occupy  
 "the moors, alien spirits, of whom one was, so far  
 "as they could most clearly tell, the semblance of  
 1350 "a woman. The other wretched (one) whom, in  
 "past days, peasants named Grendel, trod exile-  
 "paths in human form, howbeit he was greater than  
 "any other man. They have no knowledge of a  
 1355 "father, whether any (such) had been begotten for  
 "them in times past among the obscure demons. They  
 "occupy a land unknown, wolf-slopes, wind-swept  
 "head-lands, perilous marsh-paths, where the mountain  
 "stream goes down under the mists of the cliffs,—  
 1360 "a flood under the earth. It is not far hence, in  
 "measured miles, that the lake stands, over which  
 "hang rimy groves: the wood fixed by its roots  
 "overhangs the water.
- 1365 "There may be seen each night a baleful won-  
 "der,—fire on the flood! None of the sons of men  
 "lives wise enough to know the bottom. Although,  
 "pressed by the hounds, the ranger of the heath,  
 "the hart strong in its horns, may seek the forest,  
 1370 "chased from far, he will give up his life, his being,  
 "on the brink, sooner than he will hide his head  
 "in it. That is no pleasant spot. Thence rises up  
 "the surging water darkly to the clouds, when the  
 1375 "wind stirs up baleful storms, until the air is misty,  
 "the heavens weep."

*(1376—1382) Now again does Hrothgar appeal to Beowulf for help. If he will seek out the monster rich rewards shall be his.*

1380 “Now once more is counsel to be had from thee  
 “alone. Thou knowest not yet the haunt, the peril-  
 “ous place, where thou mayst find the sin-stained  
 “being. Seek it if thou darest! I will reward thee  
 “for the struggle with riches, with ancient treasures,  
 “as I did before,—with twisted gold, if thou dost  
 “come away.”

## XXI

## THE EXPEDITION TO THE MERE

[Lines 1383—1472]

(1383—1389) *Beowulf bids Hrothgar be of good cheer. We must all die; the best thing is to win a reputation while we may.*

1385 Beowulf son of Ecgtheow answered: “Sorrow  
 “not, wise man. Better is it for each one of us  
 “that he should wreak his friend, than greatly  
 “mourn. Each of us must expect an end of living  
 “in this world; let him who may win glory before  
 “death, for that is best at last for the departed  
 “man of war.”

(1390—1398) *He will go to work at once, and he promises Hrothgar that the monster shall not escape.*

1390 “Rise, guardian of the realm! Come, let us go at  
 “once, and spy the track of Grendel’s relative. I  
 “promise thee, he shall not escape to cover, nor to  
 “the lap of earth, nor into mountain wood, nor to  
 1395 “the ocean’s depth, go where he may! This day

“do thou have patience as to all thy woes, as  
“I expect of thee!”

*(1399—1417) Hrothgar thanks God, takes horse, and tracks the footprints of the weird creature. Beowulf himself, with a handful of followers, goes forward through difficult country till he reaches a gloomy lake.*

Then sprang the veteran up,—thanked God, the  
1400 mighty Lord, for what the man had said. Then  
was a horse bridled for Hrothgar, a steed with curled  
mane. The sapient prince advanced in stately  
wise: the foot force of shield-bearers went forth.  
Along the forest-paths footprints were freely visible—  
1405 (her) course over the lands. She had gone forth  
over the dusky moors, and borne the best of vas-  
sals—of those who watched over the home with  
Hrothgar—lifeless! Then the son of Ethelings  
went over the steep, rocky slopes, the narrow  
1410 ways, the thin, lone paths—an unknown course,  
the beetling crags, many homes of water-sprites.  
He with a few skilled men went on before to  
view the place, until he suddenly found mountain  
1415 trees hanging over the grey rock—a dismal wood;  
the water stood below, blood-stained and turbid.

*(1418—1423) There a ghastly sight meets the whole company. Aeschere's head is found on a cliff, beside the blood-stained waters.*

It was travail of soul for all the Danes, the  
1420 Scyldings' friends, for many a knight to suffer,—pain

for each of the nobles, when they found Aeschere's head upon the sea cliff. The water surged with blood, with hot gore: the people gazed on it.

(1423—1432) *The troop sit down, watch the water-monsters in and about the lake, and scare them by the sound of their war-horn.*

At times the horn sang out a ready battle-note. The warriors all sat down. Then they beheld  
 1425 about the water many of the race of reptiles, wondrous sea-dragons practising on the deep: upon the cliff-slopes, too, they saw sea-monsters lie, who at morning time take their toilsome course over the sail-road, serpents and savage beasts.  
 1430 They rushed away, bitter and choleric,—they had heard the noise, the war-horn's note.

(1432—1441) *One of them is shot by an arrow from Beowulf's bow, despatched by boar-spears and hauled on to the cliff, a marvel to the onlookers.*

One the chief of the Geats severed from life, from his battling with the waters, by his shafted bow, so that the hard war-arrow stuck in his  
 1435 vitals,—he was the slower in swimming on the fjord, for that death carried him off. Quickly he was hard pressed upon the waves with sharp-barbed boar-spears,—subdued by force and dragged on  
 1440 to the cliff, a wondrous wave-bearer. Men examined the horrible sprite.

(1441—1472) *Beowulf dons his armour, his trusty war-corslet and wondrous helmet; he takes also Hrunting, a famous sword which Unferth*

*lends him, and prepares to plunge into the lake. Unferth himself, for all his boasting, dares not risk his life therein.*

Beowulf equipped himself with princely armour ; no whit did he feel anxious for his life. His war-corslet, woven by hand, ample and deftly worked, was  
 1445 to make trial of the mere ; the same was apt to shield his bone-girt chest, so that for him the battle-grasp, the fury's vengeful grip, might do no damage to his breast, his life ! Thereto the shining helmet screened his head, which was to be immersed in  
 1450 watery depths, to tempt the wave-mixture, adorned with gold, belted with lordly chains, as in past days the weapon-smith had wrought it,—formed it wondrously, and set it round with swine-figures, that after that no sword or battle-knife could ever  
 1455 bite it. That, too, was not the least of mighty aids, which Hrothgar's spokesman lent him in his need. Hrunting was the name of that hilted sword, which was one among the foremost of ancient heirlooms. The blade was iron, stained by  
 1460 poison-twigs, hardened with blood of battle ; never had it failed any man in time of war, of those who grasped it with their hands, who durst approach the paths of terror, camping-place of foes :—not the first time was that, that it had doughty work  
 1465 to do. When he lent the weapon to a braver swordsman, surely the son of Ecglaf, lusty in strength, did not remember what he said before, when drunk with wine. Himself he durst not risk his life beneath the tumult of the waves,—accom-  
 1470 plish deeds of prowess ; there he lost his fame,

—renown for valour. Not thus was it with the other, when he had made ready for the fray.

## XXII

BEOWULF'S PARTING WORDS. HE ATTACKS  
THE MONSTER

[Lines 1473—1556]

*(1473—1491) Then, in case he loses his life, Beowulf reminds Hrothgar of his promises. He pledges him to protect his trusty followers, and to hand over to Hygelac the presents he had given him. The latter will see what a generous rewarder Beowulf had! He also enjoins Hrothgar to hand back to Unferth the sword Hrunting, with which he means to conquer or die!*

Beowulf, son of Ecgtheow, spake: “Remember  
“now, illustrious son of Healfdene, sapient chief,  
1475 “rewarding friend of men, now that I am at the  
“point to start, what we two said a while ago;—  
“if I for thy necessity should cease from life, that  
“thou wouldst always be to me in absence in a  
1480 “father’s place. Be thou a guardian of my brother-  
“thanes, my close companions, if war takes me  
“off; and do thou also send to Hygelac the trea-  
“sures which thou gavest me, beloved Hroth-  
“gar. The Geatish lord may then appreciate from  
1485 “the gold,—the son of Hrethel see, when he  
“looks on the treasure, that I found out a good  
“ring-giver, high in excellence,—enjoyed (things)  
“while I might.

“And let thou Unferth, widely famous man, have  
 “back the old heirloom, the curious wavy sword,  
 1490 “hard of its edge. I will with Hrunting work me  
 “out renown, or death shall take me!”

*(1492—1500) Then he goes down into the lake,  
 and it is a good part of the day before he gets to  
 the bottom. Grendel's mother becomes aware that  
 her retreat is being invaded.*

After these words the chief of the Weder Geats  
 pressed bravely on, and would not even wait an  
 1495 answer. The water-flood received the warrior. It  
 was a (good) part of the day before he could des-  
 cry the solid bottom. Quickly she who, fiercely  
 ravenous, had ranged the lake for fifty years, grim  
 1500 and greedy, found one of the human kind was there,  
 examining from above the home of monsters.

*(1501—1505) She clutches at him, but his goodly  
 harness protects him, and he comes to no hurt.*

Then she clutched at him, she seized the war-  
 rior with her horrid claws; for all that, she did not  
 so soon wound his lusty frame,—outside the ring-  
 1505 mail hedged him round, so that she could not  
 break the corslet through, the linkèd mail-shirt,  
 with her hateful fingers.

*(1506—1512) Howbeit she drags him down-  
 wards to her lair, and he is sore let in using his  
 weapons, and in swimming, by the clasp of his  
 adversary and the attacks of other water-sprites.*



Then the water-wolf, when she came to the bottom, bore the ring-clad lord to her own dwelling, so that, brave though he was, he could not wield his weapons; for so many of the monsters hampered him in swimming, many a sea-beast pressed with his warlike tusks upon his shirt of mail,—the monsters chased him.

*(1512—1528) At last he comes to a cavern to which the water has no access, and by the lurid flame therein he descries the mere-wife and deals her a desperate blow with his sword. But for the first time the weapon fails—it glances back from the head of the monster.*

Then the chief perceived that he was in some unfriendly hall or other, where no water harmed him in any way, nor might the sudden rush of the flood touch him, by reason of the vaulted chamber;—a fiery light he saw, a pallid flame, shine brightly. Then the brave man perceived the she-wolf of the deep, the mighty mere-wife; he gave her a forceful slash with his battle-sword; his hand did not hold back the blow,—so that the ringèd blade sang out a greedy war-song on her head. Then the stranger found the shining weapon would not bite, could do no harm to life, in that the blade failed the chieftain in his need; it had stood many close encounters in times past, had often cleft the helmet, the corslet of the doomed; that was the first time for the precious treasure that its worth gave out.

*(1529—1536) Nothing daunted, Beowulf flings aside the sword and trusts to his mighty hand-grip.*

Hygelac's kinsman was still resolute, by no  
 1530 means slack in courage, bent on daring deeds. Then the furious fighter cast aside the damasked sword, covered with ornament, so that on earth it lay, rigid and steely-edged; he trusted to his strength, the hand-grip of his might. So must a  
 1535 man do when he thinks to win enduring fame in war—he will have no care about his life.

*(1537—1556) He seizes the monster by the shoulder and flings her to the ground; but she drags him down with her, gets upon him, and draws her dagger. She cannot, however, pierce his armour—God and his war-corslet protect him, and he stands upright once more.*

The prince of the War-Geats then seized Grendel's mother by the shoulder—he recked not of the struggle;—the brave in combat, bursting as he was with rage, so flung the deadly foe that  
 1540 she fell upon the ground. She quickly yielded him a recompense again with fearful graspings, and clutched at him; sick at heart, she overthrew the strongest of warriors, of foot-combatants, so that he had a fall.

1545 She sat then on her hall-visitor and drew her dagger, broad and brown of edge;—she would avenge her child, her only offspring. The woven hauberk lay upon his shoulder,—that preserved his  
 1550 life, barred entry against point and edge. Then

had the hero of the Geats perished under the spacious mere-bottom, had not his war-corslet, his hardy battle-net, furnished him succour, and the  
 555 holy God, the all-wise Lord, brought about victory in battle; without difficulty, the Ruler of the heavens decided it aright after he, (Beowulf) had got up again.

## XXIII

END OF THE FIGHT WITH GRENDEL'S MOTHER.

THE RETURN

[Lines 1557—1650]

*(1557—1572) At this juncture Beowulf descries in the vault an old gigantic sword, seizes it, and with the courage of despair, deals the monster a fearful blow in the neck, whereat she falls and dies, and a new brightness fills the chamber.*

He saw then among the armour a victory-blest weapon, an old titanic sword, doughty of edge,  
 560 a prize of fighters; choicest of weapons that, howbeit it was greater than any other man could carry to the battle-play, good and majestic, the work of giants. Then he, champion of the Scyldings, seized the belted hilt; swung the ringed sword,  
 565 savage and battle-fierce; struck furiously, reckless of life, so that the hard sword clung to her neck and broke her bone-rings; the blade cleft her doomed flesh-wrapping through and through; on the floor she fell. The sword was gory, in his  
 570 work the man rejoiced. The gleam flashed forth, light was diffused within, as when the candle of the firmament shines brightly out of heaven.

(1572—1590) *Then Beowulf examines the vault, sword in hand, and lights upon the carcass of Grendel, whose head he cuts off.*

He gazed about the chamber and then turned him by the wall; Hygelac's captain, incensed and resolute, the hardy warrior, uplifted the weapon  
 1575 by the hilt. The blade was not discarded by the hero, but he wished at once to pay back Grendel for the many raids which he had made upon the West-Danes, far oftener than at that one time when  
 1580 he slew Hrothgar's hearth-companions in their slumber,—ate fifteen men of Danish race while sleeping, and bore off as many more, a ghastly booty. He, wrathful warrior, paid him back that loan, to  
 1585 that degree that he saw Grendel lying in his resting-place, worn out with fighting, destitute of life, as he was maimed erewhile in fight at Heorot. The body gaped wide when it met the blow, the lusty sword-stroke after death. Then he cut off  
 1590 his head.

(1591—1605) *The onlookers on the bank of the mere now observe that its waters are troubled and stained with blood; they give way to gloomy forebodings, and at three o'clock in the afternoon Hrothgar and his Danes return home, leaving Beowulf's little band of followers still faithfully waiting for their lord, but almost in despair.*

Soon, clear-sighted followers who looked upon the mere with Hrothgar noticed this—the wave-blendings were all churned up, the water stained with blood.

595 Hoary-haired veterans spoke about the prince together, (saying) that they did not expect the noble chief again—that he would come, buoyant with victory, to seek their famous prince; for it seemed to many that the sea-wolf had despatched him.

600 Then came the ninth hour of the day; the brave Scyldings deserted the headland; the generous friend of men took himself home from thence.

The foreigners sat down, sick at their heart, and gazed upon the mere; they [knew, and] did not expect that they should see their friend and lord  
605 again.

*(1605—1617) Beowulf takes but little spoil in the cave—Grendel's head and the hilt of the sword—for the blade had been dissolved by the poisonous blood of the monster.*

Then the sword, the war-blade, began to waste away in gory icicles, by reason of the foeman's blood. It was one of the marvels that it all melted, very like to ice, when as the Father—he who  
1610 has mastery of times and tides, that is the real Ruler—loosens the bond of frost, unwinds the flood-ropes.

He, prince of the Weder Geats, did not take more of precious objects in the caves,—though he saw many there,—than the head, and the hilt be-  
1615 sides, adorned with treasure; the sword was already melted, the damasked blade burnt up,—so hot had been the blood, the fiend so poisonous, who in that place had died.

*(1618—1628) Soon he is swimming upwards again through the now purified waters, and lands amid the rejoicings of his company.*

Soon he was swimming who erewhile had in the fray survived the onslaught of the foes; he shot  
 1620 upwards through the water: the swirling eddies, the broad expanses were all purged, when the strange spirit let his life-days go, this fleeting state. Then came to land the sea-men's chief, sturdily swimming, and revelled in his lake-booty, the  
 1625 mighty burden that he had with him. Then went the trusty band of followers towards him, they thanked God, rejoiced about their lord, that they could see him safe-and-sound.

*(1629—1643) He is relieved of his armour by the side of the now calm lake, and his followers go back with him to Hrothgar's Hall, radiant with victory. Four of them have hard work to carry the monster's head on a pole.*

Then the helmet and the corslet were quickly  
 1630 loosened from the valiant one; the lake calmed down, the water overcast with clouds, stained with the blood of battle. Thence went they forth along the foot-worn tracks, glad at their hearts, the men of kingly pluck measured the country ways, the well-known roads; toilsomely for each one of those  
 1635 high heroes they bore the head from off the sea-girt cliff; four of them had much work to bear into the princely hall the head of Grendel on the murderous pole. So at last there came, suddenly  
 1640 advancing to the Hall, fourteen Geats, keen and

warlike, and the lord of men among them, radiant in the multitude, trod the meadows by the mead-hall.

*(1644—1650) Arrived at the Hall, Beowulf enters in triumph to greet Hrothgar. Grendel's head is also brought into the Hall, a thing of horror to the queen and the assembled nobles.*

Then entered in the chief of the thanes, the man  
 45 valiant in deeds, exalted with renown, the hero bold  
 in battle, to greet Hrothgar. Then was Grendel's  
 head borne by the hair on to the chamber-floor,  
 where people drank, a fearful thing before the  
 nobles and the lady too; the men beheld a wondrous  
 50 spectacle.

## XXIV AND XXV

BEOWULF TELLS OF HIS ADVENTURES, AND HROTHGAR  
 FOLLOWS WITH A DIDACTIC SPEECH. AFTER  
 BANQUETING AND A NIGHT'S REST THE GEATS  
 GET READY TO GO

[Lines 1651—1739; 1740—1816]

*(1651—1670) Beowulf lays before the king his trophies, the monster's head and sword-hilt, and relates how narrowly he escaped defeat and death, —how Hrunting failed him in his hour of need, and he was guided by the good providence of God to see another sword hanging on the wall of the chamber, wherewith he killed the mother of Grendel, and cut off the head of the dead Grendel as well. As the sword-blade was completely eaten away by*

*the acrid blood of the two water-sprites, Beowulf could only bring away the hilt as a trophy.*

Beowulf, son of Ecgtheow, spoke. "Behold, we  
 "have brought thee with gladness, O son of Healfdene,  
 "ruler of the Scyldings, these sea-spoils which thou  
 1655 "lookst on here, in token of success. I narrowly  
 "escaped it with my life in fight under the water;  
 "I achieved the work with difficulty; almost had  
 "(my) struggling ceased, if God had not protected me.  
 1660 "I could do nothing in the fray with Hrunting,  
 "trusty though that weapon be, howbeit the Ruler  
 "of men granted me that I might see hanging in  
 "beauty on the wall a huge old sword (often and  
 "often has He guided those who are deprived of  
 "friends), so that I laid about me with that weapon.  
 1665 "Then,—as occasion favoured me,—I smote in  
 "fight the guardians of the dwelling. Then the  
 "war-blade, the chased sword, consumed when as  
 "the blood burst forth, hottest of battle-gore. The  
 "hilt I bore away thence from the foes; avenged  
 1670 "the outrages—the slaughter of the Danes—as (it)  
 "was meet."

*(1671—1676) Now is the slaughter of the Danes avenged; now may Hrothgar sleep fearlessly in Heorot, quiet and secure as at the first.*

"I promise [it] thee, then, that thou mayest sleep  
 "in Heorot free from care amid thy band of nobles  
 "and each chief among thy people, the older warriors  
 1675 "and the younger—that thou, Lord of the Scyldings,  
 "needest not fear for them murderous attacks from  
 "that direction, as thou didst aforetime."



(1677—1698) *The golden hilt is then handed to and examined by Hrothgar; it has graven on it the destruction of the race of giants by the flood, and an inscription in runic letters showing for whom it had been made.*

Then was the golden hilt, the ancient work of giants, given into the hand of the old warrior, the hoary battle-chief; it came into the Danish lord's possession after the downfall of the demons, a work of cunning craftsmen;—and what time the hostile-hearted being, God's adversary, doomed to a violent death,—his mother too—quitted this world, it passed into the power of the best earthly king between the seas,—of those who dealt out money gifts in Scandia. Hrothgar discoursed; he scrutinized the hilt, the ancient relic, upon which was writ the rise of the primeval strife; during which time the flood, the rushing deep, destroyed the brood of giants. They acted daringly: that was a race alien from the eternal Lord, (and) for that the Sovereign Ruler gave them a final meed by water's surge. Also it was correctly marked in runic letters, on the sword-guards of pure gold noted down and said, for whom that sword, choicest of weapons, with twisted hilt and snake-adornment, had been made at first.

(1698—1709) *Hrothgar affirms the præminence of Beowulf, admires his bearing, and confirms his promises towards him.*

Then the wise son of Healfdene spoke,—silent was every one! “Lo, this may he affirm who furthers

1700 "truth and right among the folk, the aged chieftain  
 "(who) remembers all, far back—that this noble  
 "was born of the better (sort). Beowulf, my friend,  
 "thy fame is raised on high over each nation far  
 1705 "and wide. Thou dost carry it all calmly, thy might  
 "with discreetness of spirit. I will fulfil my compact  
 "with thee, according as we two arranged before in  
 "talk. Thou shalt become the stay perpetual of  
 "thy people—a help of fighters."

*(1709—1722) He refers to the behaviour of the Danish king Heremod, a cruel and ungenerous tyrant, as a contrast to that of Beowulf.*

"Not so did Heremod turn out to Ecgwela's pro-  
 1710 "geny, the Glorious Scyldings. He did not flourish  
 "for the joy, but for the slaughter and the violent  
 "death of Danish folk. He killed his boon com-  
 "panions in his rage, his bosom friends, till he,  
 1715 "notorious prince, turned him from human joys  
 "alone. Although the mighty God favoured him  
 "above all men with the joys of power and strength  
 "and helped him on, still there grew up within his  
 "heart a savage spirit; never gave he presents to  
 1720 "the Danes, after the custom, joyless he lived,  
 "so that he suffered misery for that rupture, long  
 "continued trouble with his folk."

*(1722—1739) Heremod's history points a moral. God sometimes gives a man great prosperity,—everything seems in his favour.*

"Do thou instruct thyself by that, know thou  
 "what manly virtue is. I, wise from my many  
 "winters, told this tale on thy account. It is a

725 “wondrous thing to say how mighty God deals out  
 “to mankind wisdom, lands and rank, by his vast  
 “spirit. He has control of all things. Sometimes  
 “He lets His thought turn to the love of a man of  
 730 “famous stock: gives him on his estate enjoyment  
 “of this world, a fenced city of men to hold; makes  
 “quarters of the world, a spacious empire, subject  
 “to him in such wise that he himself may not  
 735 “think out its limit, from his little wit. He lives  
 “in plenty; nothing—sickness nor old age—stands  
 “in his way, no trouble clouds his soul, nor strife  
 “(nor) murderous hatred anywhere appears, but all  
 “the world moves to his will.”

(1739—1757) *Until a time comes when his sense of what is due to others becomes torpid, to his great peril, and arrogance takes possession of him. He cannot resist the promptings of the Evil One. All he has seems too little. He covets, and neglects the great duty of giving, forgetful of God's bounty to him and of the future state. One day he drops out of his place, and is succeeded by another who wins a well-earned security by lavish gifts.*

1740 “He knows no worse estate [XXV] until a measure  
 “of insolence waxes and rankles in him, when the  
 “warder, the soul's guardian, sleeps. That sleep is  
 “too sound, hedged in with sorrows; the murderer is  
 “very close, who from the wingèd bow shooteth with  
 1745 “fell intent. Then he is struck at the heart, under  
 “his armour, with the piercing arrow. He cannot  
 “keep himself from stain, because of strange be-  
 “hests of the Accursed Spirit. What he has held  
 “for a long time seems to him too little. He covets,

1750 "soured in mind; never gives, in proud rejoicing,  
 "circlets overlaid with gold, no thought has he about  
 "the world to come, and he disdains the share of  
 "honours God, the Lord of Glory, gave him in  
 "time past. It happens after, as the final act, that  
 "the precarious body droops and falls as fore-  
 1755 "ordained; another takes his place who gives out  
 "ornaments ungrudgingly, the old possessions of the  
 "prince; he recks not of alarms."

(1758—1768) *So Hrothgar exhorts Beowulf not to be arrogant or unmindful (like Heremod) of the future. His flourishing time will last for a while, and then death will come.*

"Against this baleful rancour guard thyself, dear  
 "Beowulf, best of men; choose thee that better part,  
 "thy lasting profit."

1760 "Incline thee not to arrogance, famous warrior!  
 "Now shall the fulness of thy strength last for a  
 "while, but soon after it shall be, that malady or  
 "sword shall cut thee off from power, or the embrace  
 "of fire or welling of a flood, or onset with the  
 1765 "knife, or arrow's flight, or hideous old age or glance  
 "of eyes will mar and darken all, and straightway  
 "it shall be that death shall overpower thee, noble  
 "warrior!"

(1769—1784) *He himself had been king for fifty years, prosperous and happy, and then Grendel suddenly appeared—a constant trouble. But now, thank God, he is permitted to look on the monster's severed head. He bids Beowulf take part in the banqueting and promises him much treasure on the morrow.*

1770 "Thus have I ruled the Ring-Danes fifty years  
 "under the heavens, and have protected them in  
 "war from many a tribe, so that I did not deem  
 "that I had any foe under the breadth of heaven.  
 "And lo! A change from this came to me in my  
 1775 "land, sorrow succeeding joy, since Grendel, ancient  
 "foe, became my visitant. By reason of this harry-  
 "ing I suffered constantly much grief of mind. And  
 "so, thanks be to the Creator, the eternal God, for  
 "what I have experienced while still alive,—that  
 1780 "with mine eyes I gaze upon this bloody butchered  
 "head, the agelong struggling past!

"Go now to thy seat, take part in the joy of  
 "banqueting, honoured for thy valour. Exceeding  
 "many treasures shall be shared between us, when  
 "to-morrow comes."

*(1785—1802) After the banquet Hrothgar and  
 the tired-out Beowulf retire to rest.*

1785 The Geat was glad of mood, and went straight-  
 way to seek his seat, as the sage (king) enjoined  
 him. Then, as before, goodly provision was arrang-  
 ed afresh for the heroic banqueters. The shroud  
 1790 of night grew thicker—dark over the noble company.  
 The whole band rose, the grey-haired patriarch-  
 Scylding would fain go to his bed. Exceeding  
 much did the Geat, the brave shield-warrior, desire  
 to rest. Straightway the chamberlain, who in  
 1795 courtesy looked after all the noble's needs—such  
 (needs) as at that day seafarers used to have,  
 guided him forth, weary with his adventure, come  
 from far. Then the large-hearted man reposed,

the chamber towered aloft, spacious and gold  
 1800 adorned; the stranger slept within, until the swarthy  
 raven, blithe of heart, harbingered the radiance  
 of heaven.

*(1802—1816) With the return of day a great  
 yearning comes to Beowulf and his party to get  
 back to their fatherland. They prepare for the voyage  
 and Beowulf returns the sword Hrunting to its  
 owner, Unferth, with thanks, and goes to the Hall  
 in order to say a few last words to the King.*

Then the bright sunshine came and glided o'er  
 the plains. The warriors hastened, the nobles  
 1805 were eager to go back to their people, the high-  
 souled visitor wished himself far from thence—  
 wished to regain his ship. Then the brave bade  
 the son of Ecglaf gird on Hrunting,—bade him  
 take his sword, his precious weapon; he expressed  
 1810 his thanks to him for that loan,—said that he count-  
 ed it a trusty friend in battle, doughty in war; no  
 whit did he blame the sword's edge with his words.  
 A chivalrous soul was he! And when the warriors  
 1815 ready in their mail were fit to start, the etheling  
 honoured by the Danes went to the high seat where  
 the other was. Hrothgar he greeted, hero bold in fight.

## XXVI

BEOWULF'S PARTING SPEECH AND HROTHGAR'S  
 REPLY. THE LEAVE-TAKING

[Lines 1817—1887]

*(1817—1839) Beowulf informs the king of his  
 pending departure, thanks him for all his kindness,*

*and promises him substantial help in case of any new emergency, and if he wishes it, an introduction for his son Hrethric at the Geatic court.*

Beowulf, son of Ecgtheow, held forth: "Now  
 "we seafarers, come from far, desire to say that  
 1820 "we intend to go to Hygelac. We have been  
 "treated here quite after our desires,—thou hast  
 "served us well. If then I can by any means gain  
 "on earth more of thy heart's affection, lord of men,  
 1825 "than I have so far done, ready I'll be at once for  
 "warlike deeds. If I learn this across the circuit  
 "of the sea,—that those around thy borders threaten  
 "harm, as enemies have done in times gone by, I'll  
 1830 "bring a thousand thanes and heroes to thy help.  
 "For Hygelac, lord of the Geats, I know, though  
 "he is young, that he, his people's shepherd, will  
 "further me by word and deed, so that I may sup-  
 "port thee well, and to thy rescue bring my shaft-  
 1835 "ed spear, the succour of my might, when thou hast  
 "need of men.

"And then if Hrethric, the king's son, decides  
 "(to come) to Geatish courts, he shall find friends  
 "in plenty there;—for him who has good parts  
 "himself, far lands are visited with greater good."

*(1840—1865) Hrothgar replies, praising Beowulf's discretion and indicating him as a possible and promising successor to Hygelac. He has brought it to pass that there is peace between the Geats and Danes, where formerly there was enmity. This peace Hrothgar will do his best to cement.*

- 1840 Hrothgar addressed him in return: "The wise  
 "Lord put these speeches in thy mind. Never  
 "heard I a man talk more discreetly at so young  
 "an age; strong art thou in thy might and ripe  
 1845 "in mind, wise in thy spoken words. I reckon  
 "there is chance, if this falls out,—that spear or  
 "combat fierce and grim, disease or knife, takes  
 "off the son of Hrethel, (takes) thy prince, the  
 "shepherd of thy people, and thou hast thy life,  
 1850 "that the sea-roving Geats may have no better  
 "man to choose as king, as paymaster of warriors,  
 "than thyself, if thou dost will to rule the kingdom  
 "of thy kin. Thy disposition charms me more as  
 "time goes on, dear Beowulf.
- 1855 "Thou hast effected that to both the folks—Spear-  
 "Danes and people of the Geats,—there shall be  
 "peace in common; wars shall cease, the venge-  
 "ful enmities, which erewhile they endured; that,  
 "while I govern this wide realm, there shall be  
 1860 "interchange of treasure, many a man shall greet  
 "his fellow with good things across the gannet's  
 "bath; the ringèd ship shall bring over the seas  
 "gifts and love-tokens. I know the people are of  
 1865 "steadfast build, both as to friend and foe, blame-  
 "less in both respects, after old custom."

*(1866—1880) The aged king gives Beowulf twelve costly gifts and weeps at his leave-taking, overcome with emotion at the thought that he may never see him again.*

Then did the shield of nobles, Healfdene's son,  
 give him within twelve valuable gifts, and bade him



go in health, visit his kindred people, quickly  
 1870 return again. Then the king, noble in lineage,  
 the Scyldings' prince, kissed the best of thanes,  
 and clasped him round the neck,—tears streamed  
 adown him, grizzly-haired old man. For him, the  
 1875 aged patriarch, there was chance of either, but  
 especially of this, that they might [not?] see each  
 other more, brave men in council. The man was  
 so beloved by him that he could not hold back his  
 feelings, but in his bosom, rooted in his heart-  
 strings, a sacred longing after the dear man ran  
 1880 counter to his blood.

*(1880—1887) So Beowulf, rejoicing in the rich  
 bounty of the king, sets off, accompanied by his men.  
 All praise the munificence of Hrothgar.*

Then Beowulf, champion brave with gold, flushed  
 with his treasure, did the greensward tread; the  
 sea-goer, which rode at anchor, waited its owning  
 lord. Then, as they went, was Hrothgar's bounti-  
 1885 fulness often praised; that was an altogether blame-  
 less king, until old age deprived him of the joys of  
 power,—he who had worsted many oftentimes.

## XXVII

THE VOYAGE HOMEWARD AND ARRIVAL AT HYGELAC'S COURT. THE TALE OF THRYTHO

[Lines 1888—1962]

*(1888—1903) Arrived at the water's edge, they  
 meet the coast-warden, whose courteous behaviour*

*is rewarded by a sword from Beowulf. They load the ship with their armour and presents.*

Thus to the water came the troop of most courageous liegemen,—ring-mail they wore, limb-cor-  
 1890 slets interlocked. The land-guard spied the nobles coming back, as he had done before; not with contumely did he hail the visitors from off the headland's brow, but up towards them rode, and told the Weder-folk that welcome went the bright-  
 1895 mailed warriors to their ships.

Then was the spacious sea-boat on the beach laden with battle-gear, the ring-prowed ship with horses and valuables; the mast towered above Hrothgar's hoarded treasures.

1900 To the boat-keeper he gave a sword bound round with gold, so that thenceforth he was more honoured on the mead-bench for that treasure,—for that heirloom of a gift.

*(1903—1913) So they depart, and after a prosperous voyage arrive at the land of the Geats.*

Then gat he him off on ship, to ruffle the deep  
 1905 water; Danish land he left. Then to the mast a sail, one of the sea-cloths, was fastened by a sheet; the wave-borne timbers groaned, the wind over the billows did not throw out of her course the wave-floater; the sea-goer travelled, foamy-necked she  
 1910 sailed forth o'er the main, with wreathèd prow over the sea-streams, so that they could descry the Geatish cliffs, the well-known headlands. The keel shot up, driven by the wind; it stuck upon the land.

(1914—1919) *The haven-watchman hurried to the beach, from which he had so often gazed seawards in the hope of descriing Beowulf's ship, and made fast the craft to the shore.*

1915 The haven-ward was quickly ready at the water's edge, he who before upon the strand had long time gazed into the distance, longing for the dear men; he made fast to the beach the roomy ship, held fast with anchor-ropes, lest the waves' force should drive the winsome craft away from them.

(1920—1931) *The treasure is carried up to the magnificent castle, not far from the sea, in which Hygelac lives with his young and estimable wife Hygd.*

1920 Then he bade carry up the jewels and gold plate; it was not far thence for him to seek out the distributor of wealth; Hygelac, son of Hrethel, sojourns there at home, himself and his retainers, hard by the sea-wall.

1925 The building was magnificent, the king of heroic strength, noble in hall; Hygd very youthful, wise, well-mannered, although she, the daughter of Haereth, had dwelt but few winters within the castle walls; for all that she was not illiberal, nor  
1930 too niggardly with gifts, with costly treasures, to the Geatish folk.

## EPISODE OF THRYTHO

[Lines 1931—1962]

(1931—1944) *The story of Thrytho, wife of Offa, is apparently introduced here in order to heighten the impression of Hygd's goodness. Thrytho was proud,*

*suspicious and vengeful. Courtiers who displeased her were treacherously killed.*

1935 Thrytho, ambitious queen of the people, showed moody pride, terrible vindictiveness; no brave man among the court favourites, except her husband, durst gaze on her openly with his eyes, but he might count on deadly bonds being appointed for him, woven by hand; very soon after his seizure was the knife brought into service, so that the damasked dirk might settle it,—proclaim the punishment of death. That is 1940 no queenly custom for a woman to practise, peerless though she may be, that a peace-weaver should assail the life of a valued liegeman, because of fancied insult. Howbeit the kinsman of Hemming detested all this.

*(1945—1962) Yet it was said by some that after her marriage with Offa she became less spiteful, and in process of time showed deep love for her husband, the wise and noted Offa, and used her royal estate well.*

1945 Men at their ale-drinking told another story:—that she brought about less harm to the people, less spiteful vengeance, when once she had been given, gold-bedecked, to the young champion, dear and of 1950 high descent; when she, at her father's bidding, visited in a journey Offa's court over the dusky flood.

There, afterwards, she used her fortunes well upon the royal seat, famed for her goodness, while she was alive; held highest love towards the prince of 1955 heroes, who was of all mankind, as I have heard, the best between the seas of human kin. Wherefore Offa, spear-bold man, was noted far and wide for gifts and victories; and ruled his native land with 1960 wisdom. Of him was born Eomaer, stay of warriors, kinsman of Hemming, grandson of Garmund, mighty in the fray.

## XXVIII AND XXIX

BEOWULF'S RECEPTION BY HYGELAC. HE BEGINS TO  
TELL THE STORY OF HIS EXPEDITION, BUT  
DIVERGES INTO AN EPISODE ABOUT HROTH-  
GAR'S DAUGHTER FREAWARU. AFTER-  
WARDS HE RESUMES HIS STORY

[Lines 1963—2038; 2039—2143]

*(1963—1976) In the morning sunshine Beowulf and his comrades walk from the beach to the castle. His coming is quickly announced and preparation is made for his reception, by the King's orders.*

Then went the hero forth, himself and his com-  
panions, by the sand, treading the sea-beaches, the  
1965 broad foreshores. The world's lamp shone, the busy  
sun in the south;—they passed along their way,  
went quickly thither, where they heard say the  
prop of courtiers, the slayer of Ongentheow, the  
good young warrior-king, within the castle dealt  
1970 out rings. Quickly was Beowulf's coming told to  
Hygelac,—that the warriors' shield, his mate in  
arms, had come alive into the precincts and was  
going on towards the court, whole from the tug  
of war.

1975 Forthwith the chamber was prepared within, as  
the great ruler ordered.

*(1977—1983) After a formal greeting, Beowulf sits facing Hygelac in hall, and the mead-cup is handed round to the company.*

Then he who had escaped in battle sat opposite (Hygelac) himself, kinsman facing kinsman, when the lord of men had greeted the brave soul in  
 1980 courtly speech, with forceful words. Round the hall Haereth's daughter went with stoups of mead, cherished the folk, and bore the beaker to the warriors' hands.

(1983—1998) *The king asks about Beowulf's adventures with much interest, and especially whether his expedition, of which he, the king, took a gloomy view, was successful. He thanks God for Beowulf's safe return.*

Hygelac began courteously to ask his comrade in the lofty hall—tortured was he with thirst for  
 1985 news—as to what hap the sailor-Geats had had. “How went it with you on your journey, Beowulf  
 “dear, the while you suddenly resolved to seek a  
 “feud far off, across the briny water—battle at  
 1990 “Heorot? Hast thou any whit lightened the well-  
 “known trouble of Hrothgar, famous prince? For  
 “that I seethed with gloomy care, surgings of sorrow;  
 “no faith had I in my loved liege's journey. Long  
 1995 “time I begged thee, that on no account wouldst  
 “thou go near the murderous monster, but wouldst  
 “let the South Danes settle their feud with Grendel  
 “by themselves. I give thanks to God that I am  
 “suffered to see thee safe and sound.”

(1999—2009) *Beowulf replies that his complete victory over Grendel has already become known to many.*

2000 Beowulf, son of Ecgtheow, spake forth: "It is  
 "well known, lord Hygelac, that great encounter,  
 "to many men, what a bout of fighting we had  
 "with Grendel upon that field, where he had  
 "wrought many and many a sorrow, age-long  
 2005 "misery, for the Victor-Scyldings. I avenged it all,  
 "so that no kin of Grendel upon earth can boast  
 "about that uproar in the twilight,—not he who,  
 "hedged in by the fens, lives longest of the loath-  
 "ly race."

(2009—2023) *First he went to the palace to see Hrothgar, who gave him a seat of honour. He describes the banquet which ensued, and how the queen, and Freawaru, the king's daughter, dispensed hospitality.*

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2010 "Once there, I first went to the ring-hall to greet  
 "Hrothgar. Forthwith the famous son of Healf-  
 "dene, when he had learned my mind, allotted me  
 "a seat by his own son. The company was in  
 "high feather; never in my life have I seen greater  
 "joy at mead among sitters in hall, under the vault  
 2015 "of heaven. From time to time the illustrious queen,  
 "the nations' pledge of peace, went up and down  
 "the hall, kept the young servers going, and often  
 "gave a circlet to some guest, ere she went back  
 "to her seat. Now and then, before the higher  
 2020 "courtiers, Hrothgar's daughter bare the ale-cup to  
 "the nobles from end to end. I heard those sitting  
 "in hall call her Freawaru, as she presented the  
 "studded vessel to the heroes."

## EPISODE OF FREAWARU

[Lines 2024—2069]

(2024—2031) *The mention of Freawaru leads the poet into a digression about her engagement to Ingeld, son of Froda, king of the Heathobards. Hrothgar had thought by the match to put an end to the feuds between the Heathobards and Danes. Such schemes often fail of their purpose, however.*

2025       “Young and gold-adorned, she was betrothed to  
 “Froda’s genial son. This had seemed good to the  
 “friend of the Scyldings, the protector of the king-  
 “dom,—he counts it good policy—that he should  
 “settle lots of deadly feuds, of quarrels, through  
 “that woman. Not rare is it anywhere, but frequent,  
 2030       “that the murderous spear lies idle but a little  
 “while after the downfall of a prince, competent  
 “though the bride may be.”

(2032—2040) *In this case, for instance, it was natural that the Heathobards should have no friendly feelings towards the young and noble Danish courtier who attended upon Freawaru and who wore armour captured from their ancestors in war.*

2035       “Then it may well displease the prince of the  
 “Heathobards and every thane of his nation, when  
 “he goes with the lady into hall, that his high lords  
 “should wait upon a noble scion of the Danes. Upon  
 “him gleam the heirlooms of their ancestors, hard  
 “and ring-mailed, treasure of the Heathobards, so long  
 “as they might lord it with their weapons [XXIX],  
 “until by a false step they led into the play of shields  
 2040       “their dear companions and their very lives.”

(2041—2056) *An old Heathobard warrior draws the attention of Ingeld to the sword with which the young Dane goes boastfully about in the hall, and reminds*



*him that it is the one with which his father, Froda, was slain.*

2045 “Then, at the beer-drinking, an aged spearman  
 “speaks, who eyes the treasure, recollects it all, the  
 “men’s death by the spear. His heart is sore and he  
 “begins in gloomy wise to test a young campaigner’s  
 “temper by the musings of his mind, to rouse accursèd  
 “strife, and says these words: ‘Canst thou, my friend,  
 “discern the blade, the precious weapon, which thy  
 “father bore to battle when he was under fighting-  
 2050 “mask for the last time, where the Danes slew him,  
 “the brave Scyldings took possession of the field,  
 “when Withergyld lay low after the fall of heroes?  
 “Now, some offshoot or other of these cut-throats  
 “goes about here, in our hall, rejoicing in his trap-  
 2055 “pings,—boasts of the carnage, wears the adornment  
 “you should have by right.’”

*(2057—2069) Thus he goads Ingeld, whose love for Freawaru grows cold, into avenging his father’s death on the young courtier, notwithstanding the treaty between the Heathobards and Danes. So it cannot be expected that peace will last long between the two tribes.*

2060 “Thus he urges and prompts him time after time  
 “with bitter words, until the hour comes that on  
 “account of his father’s deeds the lady’s courtier sleeps  
 “bloodstained after sword-slash, forfeit of his life; the  
 “other gets him off from thence, alive,—he knows  
 “the country well. Then is the oath of the chieftains  
 “broken on both sides, when savage spleen wells up  
 2065 “in Ingeld, and his love for his wife grows cooler  
 “with the risings of care. Hence I count not the  
 “faith of the Heathobards, their share in the tribal  
 “peace, sincere towards the Danes, their friendship  
 “stable.”

(2069—2100) *To return to Grendel. One night as Beowulf's party were guarding the hall, Grendel came and devoured one of them—Hondscio—and then attacked Beowulf, thinking to carry him off. But Beowulf was a match for him, and wrenched off his right hand, whereupon he fled away to die.*

- 2070 "Now I will proceed and tell again of Grendel,  
 "that thou, O Giver of treasure, mayst fully know  
 "what was the issue of the hand-to-hand struggle  
 "of the champions. After the gem of the heavens  
 "had glided over the earth, the furious spirit came,  
 "horrible, fierce at even, to close with us where  
 2075 "we, still whole, kept watch over the hall. There  
 "was battle brewing for Hondscio, violent death for  
 "the doomed man; he, belted champion, fell first;  
 "for him, my famous brother-thane, Grendel was  
 2080 "a devouring murderer,—he gobbled up the beloved  
 "man's whole body. Howbeit the butcher bloody-  
 "toothed, intent on evil, would not after that leave  
 "the gold hall again empty of hand, but first, lusty  
 2085 "in strength, he ventured on me,—gripped me with  
 "ready paw. His pouch hung, ample and strange,  
 "attached by curious clasps,—it was all cunningly  
 "contrived with fiendish skill and with the skins of  
 2090 "dragons. Therein he wished, the dire deed-doer,  
 "to put, as one of many, unoffending me; thus he  
 "might not do, as soon as I stood upright in my  
 "wrath. It is too long to tell out how I paid this  
 "public scourge a recompense by hand for all his  
 2095 "crimes; there, my prince, did I exalt thy nation  
 "by my works. He slipped away—enjoyed the  
 "sweets of life a little while, albeit his right hand

100 “kept trace of him at Heorot, and he, in doleful  
 “mood, fell miserably thence to the mere’s  
 “bottom.”

(2101—2114) *Next day was given up to feasting  
 and revelry. The King rewarded Beowulf richly  
 with presents at the banquet.*

105 “The Scyldings’ kindly lord repaid me richly for  
 “that deadly fight, with beaten gold,—with many  
 “treasures,—when the morrow came and we had sat  
 “us down to the banquet. There was singing and  
 110 “merriment. The patriarch Scylding, asking many  
 “questions, told of bygone times; now and again  
 “a brave called forth enchantment from the harp,  
 “that wood of pastime; sometimes told a true  
 “and mournful tale; anon the generous king would  
 115 “rehearse literally a strange adventure; then again  
 “after that an old campaigner, trammelled by his  
 “age, would make lament over his youthful days  
 “and strength in battle. His heart heaved within  
 “him, as he, old in years, brought to mind many  
 “things.”

(2115—2130) *On the ensuing night came Grendel’s  
 mother, bent on avenging her son, already  
 dead. She killed a trusty Danish counsellor,  
 Aeschere, and dragged him off to her watery home.*

115 “Thus we took our pleasure therein the live-long  
 “day, until another night ensued for men. Then,  
 “after that, was Grendel’s mother quickly ready for

“revenge; she journeyed full of care, death,—war-  
 “hate of the Weders—had cut off her son. The  
 2120 “horrid hag avenged her child, boldly she laid a  
 “warrior low; there was the life parted from  
 “Aeschere, the sage old counsellor. Nor could  
 “they, the Danish folk, when morn had come,  
 2125 “consume him, broken down and dead, with fire,  
 “nor lay the beloved man on the funeral pile.  
 “She bore away the body in her fiendish grasp,  
 “under the mountain stream. That was the bitter-  
 “est of pangs for Hrothgar, out of all those which  
 2130 “long had chanced the people’s prince.”

*(2131—2143) On an appeal from the anguish-stricken Hrothgar, who promised him reward, Beowulf sought out the monster in the depths of the lake and killed her, narrowly escaping with his life. He received much treasure from Hrothgar.*

“Then in sad mood the sovereign begged me,  
 “by thy life, that I would show prowess in the  
 “swirl of waters, risk my being, do heroic deeds;  
 “reward he promised me.  
 2135 “Then, as is widely known, I found the grim and  
 “grisly guardian of the welling water’s depths. There  
 “we were awhile, hand to hand; the water boiled  
 “with blood, and I with mighty blade cut off the  
 “head of Grendel’s mother in the subterranean hall;  
 2140 “thence with my life I hardly got away. I was  
 “not doomed as yet; but Healfdene’s son, the  
 “shield of nobles, gave me thereafter many  
 “treasures.”

## XXXI

END OF BEOWULF'S STORY. HE HANDS OVER HIS PRESENTS TO THE KING AND QUEEN AND RECEIVES HIGH REWARD FROM HYGELAC, WHO AFTERWARDS DIES AND IS SUCCEEDED BY HIS SON HEARDRED.

LATER ON BEOWULF BECOMES KING AND REIGNS PEACEABLY UNTIL A CERTAIN DRAGON APPEARS, THE GUARDIAN OF A HOARD OF TREASURE.

[Lines 2144—2220]

*(2144—2176) Hrothgar was indeed true to the old traditions with his lavish gifts, all of which Beowulf hands over to Hygelac, to whom he owes every thing, and his queen Hygd.*

“So lived the people’s king, according to the  
 145 “customs; by no means did I lack the rewards, the  
 “meed of might, but he, the son of Healfdene,  
 “gave me treasures at my own discretion, which  
 “I will bring to thee, heroic king, and offer gladly.  
 150 “All of my favours still depend from thee; I have  
 “few blood-relatives save thee, O Hygelac!”

Then he bade them bear in the boar-image, the head crest, a helmet towering in battle, a gray corslet, a splendid war-sword, and thereto pronounced this speech:—

155 “Hrothgar, the wise prince, gave this battle-  
 “dress to me, in language clear bade me that  
 “first of all I should acquaint thee of his friendly  
 “feeling, saying that King Hiorogar, Scylding lord,  
 “had it long time, yet would he not for all that

2160 "give it—the breast armour—to his son, the vali-  
 "ant Heoroward, true as he might be to him.  
 "Enjoy it all well!"

I heard that four apple-fallow horses, perfectly  
 2165 alike, followed in the track of the armour. With  
 a good grace he delivered to him the steeds and  
 treasures. So should a kinsman do, and never  
 weave a cunning snare for other, or contrive  
 death for his bosom friend by secret craft. His  
 2170 nephew was most true to Hygelac, the brave  
 in battle, and each was mindful of the other's  
 good.

I heard that he presented to Hygd the circlet,  
 that curious, wondrous jewel, which Wealththeow,  
 the prince's daughter, had given him, and three  
 2175 horses as well, graceful and bright with saddlery;  
 thenceforward was her breast adorned, after that  
 gift of decorations.

*(2177—2189) Beowulf's character is described  
 and praised. For a long time he was underrated  
 by his countrymen.*

Thus the son of Ecgtheow, the man renowned  
 in war, showed himself doughty in brave deeds,  
 2180 he bore himself discreetly, never struck down his  
 boon companions at the drinking; his was no brutal  
 mind, but he, the brave in battle, guarded with  
 the greatest human art the liberal gifts which God  
 had granted him. For a long time he was con-  
 temned, as the children of the Geats knew him  
 not to be brave, nor would the captain of war-  
 2185 hosts do him much honour at the mead-bench,  
 they very much suspected he was slack, a feeble

princeling; but rehabilitation as to every slight came for the brilliant man.

(2190—2199) *Hygelac's princely gifts to Beowulf.*

2190 Then the protector of warriors, the king of  
martial glory, bade Hrethel's legacy be brought in,  
decked with gold; there was not at that time  
among the Geats a greater treasure in the shape  
of a sword. That he laid in Beowulf's lap, and  
2195 gave him seven thousands, a mansion, and the  
rank of chief. To both of them alike had land  
descended in that country—an estate and hereditary  
right, but the other had more especially an ample  
realm, and was in that respect the more distin-  
guished.

## PART III

### BEOWULF AND THE DRAGON

[Lines 2200—3182]

(2200—2220) *After the death of Hygelac and his son Heardred, Beowulf becomes king and reigns fifty years. Then a Dragon, the guardian of a hoard of treasure, rises up to torment the nation.*

2200 **A**FTERWARDS, in later days, it fell out,  
through frays of fighting, thus; when  
Hygelac lay low and battle-blades were  
the death of Heardred, spite of sheltering shield, what  
2205 time the martial Scyldings, hardy war-wolves, sought  
him out among his conquering people, and attacked  
the nephew of Hereric in force;—then after that  
the spacious realm came into the hands of Beowulf.  
He ruled it well for fifty winters—that was an aged  
2210 king, a veteran guardian of his people,—until in the  
dark nights a certain one began to have control,—  
a dragon, who on an upland heath kept watch over  
a hoard, a high stone-barrow; below there lay a  
path unknown to men.

2215 Into that place went some man or other [Here  
follow six imperfect lines, apparently to the effect  
that the man took of the monster's hoard while  
2220 he was asleep, and roused his ire].



## XXXII

THE HISTORY OF THE HOARD AND HOW THE  
DRAGON WAS ROBBED. THE DRAGON'S  
VENGEANCE.

[Lines 2221—2311]

*(2221—2270) The man who first came upon the hoard was an outlaw who thought to take refuge in the cave. He stood aghast at the wealth of treasure round him—the rich spoils of a past generation of warriors, placed there by the last survivor of a noble company, who bewails his loneliness in a fine passage.*

Decidedly he had not voluntarily, of his own accord, sought out the fulness of the dragon's hoards,—he who injured himself sorely,—but under stress of need the slave of some one or other of the  
 2225 sons of men fled from vengeful blows, lacking a home, and fell therein, a sin-perplexèd soul. Soon it happened that grisly horror rose up before the  
 2230 stranger [Three more lines imperfect]. While terror held him, he saw the treasure-chest. There in that earthly house were many of such old heirlooms as some man or other in days of yore had cau-  
 2235 tiously hid there, the vast leavings of a noble race, dear treasures. Death had carried them off in times now past, and then the one of the people's chieftains who was stirring longest became gloomy at the loss of friends, hoped to live on for this alone  
 2240 —that he might own for a little space the slowly gathered treasures. A barrow stood all ready to

hand on open ground, near where the billows  
 surged close to a cape, made safe by secret craft;  
 2245 into that place the keeper of the jewels bare a  
 heavy portion of the wealth of chiefs, of plated  
 gold; said these few words:—"Now do thou, O  
 "Earth, hold fast what heroes might not,—property  
 "of nobles. Lo! Brave men won it at first from  
 "thee; death in war, horrid carnage, took away  
 2250 "every one of the men of my tribe who yielded  
 "up this life; they saw (the last of) festive joy.  
 "I have no one to bear sword, or to burnish the  
 "plated flagon, the precious drinking-cup; the  
 "noble warriors have departed to another place.  
 2255 "Now will the hard helmet, bedight with gold, be  
 "deprived of its adornments; the cleaners sleep  
 "who had the battle-masks to furbish. The armour  
 "too, which stood the bite of swords, in battle,  
 "mid the crash of shields, moulders as does the  
 2260 "fighter; nor may the ringed mail take long journey  
 "with the captain, in partnership with heroes.  
 "There is no joy of harp, no pastime with the  
 "gladdening lute; no good hawk sweeping through  
 "the hall, nor does the swift steed paw the castle  
 2265 "yard. The bale of death has banished hence  
 "many of the human race."

Thus with sad heart he mourned his troubles,  
 alone after them all, and sorrowfully wept by day  
 and night, until death's rising tide touched at  
 2270 his heart.

*(2270—2277) The hoard was unprotected when  
 the dragon discovered it. Although it could do  
 him no good, he mounted guard over it.*

The long-lived twilight-foe found the delightful treasure standing open; he who fierily visits barrows, the naked vengeful dragon, wrapped in flame,—  
5 sorely the country yokels dread him. His was it to seek out the hoard under the earth, where he, old in winters, shall keep watch over the heathen gold,—and not be one whit the better for it.

*(2278—2286) The outlaw seizes a precious goblet and buys the favour of his lord therewith. The hoard is ransacked.*

Thus this public scourge had occupied on earth  
10 a mighty treasure-house, until a certain man enraged him in his heart; bore to his over-lord the plated goblet, and begged his master for conditions of peace. Then was the hoard ransacked, the hoard of jewels carried off, his boon was granted to the  
15 wretched man. For the first time the lord examined the ancient work of mortals.

*(2287—2302) The dragon awakes, and becomes aware that an enemy has been in his cave, and despoiled him of treasure.*

Soon as the dragon awoke, strife was renewed; he sniffed the scent along the rock, the valiant-hearted beast descried the footprints of the foe—he had walked too near the head of the dragon with  
20 his stealthy craft. Thus may a charmed man,—one who retains the favour of the Almighty, lightly pass through both woe and banishment. The hoard-keeper searched with care over the ground, he wished

2295 to find the man who had done him this injury in his sleep; glowing and fierce at heart he went completely round the barrow oftentimes; there was not any man there, in that deserted place. Still he had gleeful thoughts of fighting—of the work of battle; at times he turned back into the barrow, and looked up the costly vessel. Soon he  
2300 discovered this,—that one of mortal kind had got wind of the gold, the splendid treasures.

*(2302—2311) He waits for the night in order to take vengeance, and then ravages the country with fire.*

The hoard-keeper waited impatiently till evening came; then was the guardian of the barrow bursting  
2305 with rage, the evil beast meant to requite with fire the costly drinking-bowl. Then was the day departed, as the dragon wished, no longer would he watch upon the rampart, but he went forth with flame, furnished with fire! The outbreak was  
2310 fearful for the country folk, and it had an end, speedily and sorely, in the person of their bounteous Lord.

## XXXIII

DEVASTATION BY THE DRAGON. BEOWULF, WHOSE PAST HISTORY IS SHORTLY RECITED, DETERMINES TO FIGHT HIM SINGLE-HANDED

[Lines 2312—2390]

*(2312—2332) The whole country-side is consumed by the fire from the dragon's mouth; even Beowulf's*

*castle is attacked by the flames. He fears that he must have displeased Almighty God, and sinks into unwonted dejection.*

Then the fiend began to vomit forth live coals, to burn the smiling homesteads; the gleam of fire stood out, a terror to the sons of men; the loathly air-flyer would leave there no thing with life. The serpent's warfare was seen right and left, the vengeance of the devastator far and near—how the fighting pest hated and humbled the Geatic folk. He shot back to his hoard again, his dark head-quarters, ere the time of day; he had surrounded the land-folk with fire, with flame and burning; trusted in his barrow, fighting powers and bulwark,—and his trust played him false! Then was the horror made known to Beowulf, quickly and credibly, that his own home, best of buildings, the princely seat of the Geats, was being swallowed by the waves of fire. That was a trial for the brave man's soul, greatest of heart-sorrows; the wise chief supposed that he had sorely angered the Almighty, the everlasting Lord, contrary to the eternal law; within him heaved his breast with gloomy thoughts, which was not wonted for him.

*(2333—2354) He has a fireproof shield of iron made for himself, and disdainful of the help of an army, determines to fight the dragon single-handed, no less daring in his old age than when he quelled Grendel and his dam.*

The flaming dragon had destroyed by fire the national stronghold, the water-washed land from

2335 without, the earthy bulwark; for that the warlike  
king, the Weders' prince, contrived vengeance against  
him. The warriors' protector, chief of earls, then  
bade a curious shield, all iron, be made for him;  
2340 he knew full well that forest-wood—a linden shield—  
could not avail him against flame. The venerable  
prince was doomed to meet with the end of his  
loan of days—of this world's life,—and the serpent  
as well, though he had held the hoarded treasure  
long.

2345 Then did the lord of rings disdain to seek out  
the wide-flier with a host, an ample army. He did  
not fear the battle for himself, nor did he count  
for anything the serpent's strategy, his strength and  
2350 courage; for that he, bold in extremity erewhile, had  
passed through many contests,—battle-crashes—after  
he, the man of victories, had purged Hrothgar's  
hall, and seized in combat Grendel's kin, of hated race.

*(2354—2366) Then again that was no mean  
encounter in which Hygelac was slain, and from  
which Beowulf escaped by swimming, defending  
himself as he went.*

2355 Not least was that of hand-to-hand encounters,  
in which Hygelac was slain, when the Geatic king,  
the gracious lord of peoples, son of Hrethel, died  
a bloody death in Friesland, by the sword struck  
2360 down. Thence Beowulf got away by his own  
strength, used his power of swimming—alone he  
on his arm had thirty battle-dresses, when in the  
sea he plunged. The Hetwaras, who, bearing their  
2365 shields, went forth against him had no cause to

boast about their fight on foot; few got them back again from that war-wolf to see their homes.

(2367—2379) *On his return to his country, the widowed queen offered him the throne, which he refused. So the young Heardred, the son of Hygelac, became king and Beowulf generously helped him with his counsel.*

Thus did the son of Ecgtheow swim back to his people over the sea's expanse, a wretched solitary. There Hygd offered him treasure and  
70 a royal throne; she trusted not her child, that he could hold the royal seats as against foreign armies, now that Hygelac was dead. But none the more could the bereaved people bring the noble chief  
75 on any conditions to be Heardred's lord, or to be willing to accept the kingly dignity. Still he upheld him with the folk by friendly counsel, kindly but with respect, until he grew older,—ruled the Weder-Geats.

(2379--2390) *Eanmund and Eadgils, banished nephews of the Swedish King Onela, come to Heardred's court for shelter. For this Onela killed Heardred, but allowed Beowulf to succeed to the throne.*

80 Banished men, sons of Ohthere, sought him out from over sea,—they had rebelled against the protector of the Scyldings, the best of the sea-kings who in Sweden gave out treasure—a famous prince.  
85 That made an end of him (Heardred), he, son of Hygelac, famishing there, had as his lot a deadly

wound by thrustings of the sword, and Ongentheow's son went back again to visit his home when Heardred lay low, and suffered Beowulf to occupy the throne and rule the Geats. He was a noble  
2390 king!

## XXXIV

BEOWULF'S VENGEANCE ON ONELA. HE SETS OUT  
TO FIGHT THE DRAGON, AND TALKS OF HIS  
PAST LIFE IN A FAREWELL SPEECH

[Lines 2391—2459]

*(2391—2396) Beowulf avenged Heardred's death by helping Eadgils, who kills Onela.*

He took care to requite the national calamity in later days; the friend of lonely Eadgils he became, he supported the son of Ohthere over the wide sea  
2395 with an army, with warriors and weapons; avenged him afterwards by means of cold and bitter marches; he (Eadgils) deprived the king of life.

*(2397—2416) Now he goes with twelve attendants to reconnoitre, having learned about the dragon's cave from the outlaw who first discovered it.*

So he, the son of Ecgtheow, got safely through each one of the attacks, the savage feuds, the desperate encounters, until that day on which he  
2400 had to try conclusions with the Reptile. Then he, the Geatish lord, went, one among twelve, bursting with rage, to look upon the Dragon. He had



learnt then from whence the feud arose, the hate  
 baleful to men,—the famous treasure-vessel had  
 2405 come into his possession, by the hand of the finder.  
 He (the latter) who had brought about the begin-  
 ning of the quarrel was the thirteenth man of the  
 company, a sad-souled captive; thither he had  
 humbly to shew the way. Against his will he went  
 2410 to the point where he knew of a certain earthy  
 chamber, a vault under the ground, hard by the  
 surgings of the sea, the strife of waters, which was  
 full within of gems and filigrees. The hideous  
 2415 warder, a spirited fighter long time under the  
 earth, guarded the golden treasures;—no easy  
 business was it to go in for any man.

*(2417—2424) Seated upon a headland, full of  
 gloomy forebodings, he makes a farewell speech to  
 his companions.*

So the king hardy in war sat on the headland,  
 and from that place the Geats gold-giving friend  
 2420 bade farewell to his hearth-companions. His spirit  
 was sad, restless and ready to depart, the Fate  
 immeasurably near, which was to wait upon the  
 agèd man, to seek the treasure of his soul, to  
 part asunder life from body; not long after that  
 was the spirit of the prince enwrapped in flesh.

*(2425—2443) First he tells how in his early  
 youth he was a favourite at King Hrethel's  
 court, and how one of the king's sons treacher-  
 ously slew the other, whose death remained un-  
 avenged.*

2425 Beowulf, son of Ecgtheow, spake: "In my youth  
 "I passed through many battle-charges, times of  
 "war; I recollect it all. I was seven winters old  
 "when the lord of treasures, the gracious ruler of  
 2430 "nations, received me from my father. King Hrethel  
 "had and kept me, gave me pay and food, bore  
 "in mind our kinship. Never through life was I  
 "a whit less liked by him as page within the  
 "castle than were any of his sons—Herebeald and  
 2435 "Haethcyn or my own Hygelac. For the eldest  
 "a murderous bed was wrongfully prepared by  
 "the action of his kinsman, for Haethcyn struck  
 "him down,—his lord and friend—by an arrow  
 "from his bow of horn; he missed the mark and  
 2440 "shot his relative—one brother the other—with his  
 "bloody shaft. That was a gratuitous onset, pepe-  
 "trated with treachery, sickening to the heart; and  
 "yet for all that the prince had to quit life un-  
 "avenged."

*(2444—2459) The piteous case of a father who  
 loses a son by a violent death is touchingly portrayed.*

"So it is painful to an old man to experience  
 2445 "that his son should swing upon the gallows  
 "in his youth; that he may utter then a dirge, a  
 "doleful song, when his son hangs as a sport for the  
 "raven, and he, old, stricken in years, can frame no  
 2450 "help for him. Unceasingly, at every morn, he  
 "is reminded of the passing of his son; he cares  
 "not to wait for another heir within his quarters,  
 "when one has had his experience of deeds in the  
 "shape of a violent death. With anxious care he

2455 “sees in his son’s dwelling the festive hall abandoned,  
 “a lodgement for the winds, its merriment all gone;  
 “the cavaliers sleep, the champions, in their graves,  
 “there is no sound of harp, no merry-making in  
 “the courts, as once there was.”

## XXXV

BEOWULF ENDS HIS DISCOURSE AND GOES FORTH TO  
 ATTACK THE DRAGON. THE FIGHT BEGINS.

[Lines 2460—2601]

*(2460—2479) Hrethel renounces the joys of life  
 and passes the rest of his days in solitary sadness.  
 At his death he leaves everything to his sons.*

2460 “Then he goes to his couch and sings a sorrowful  
 “lay, the one for the other; everything seems too  
 “spacious for him, both fields and dwelling-place.

“In like manner the protector of the Weders bore  
 “with heaving breast his heart’s sorrow about Here-  
 2465 “beald; he could not in any wise avenge that feud  
 “upon the murderer; none the sooner could he  
 “pursue the man of war with hostile acts, though  
 “he was not beloved by him. Thus he gave up  
 “the joys of men, from that sorrow which the mishap  
 “had brought him; he chose God’s light. He left  
 2470 “to his sons, when he withdrew from life, the land  
 “and castle, as a wealthy man does.

“Then was there conflict and strife between the  
 “Swedes and Geats, a common feud across the broad  
 “water, harsh enmity, after Hrethel was dead; and  
 2475 “the sons of Ongentheow were vigorous and keen  
 “on fighting,—no wish had they to hold the peace

“across the lakes, but near Hreosnabeorh planned  
“oftentimes a dire and treacherous trap.”

*(2479—2489) Then the Swedes attack the country, and kill Haethcyn. In revenge, Eofor kills the Swedish king Ongentheow.*

2480 “That—the feud and outrage—did my friendly  
“relatives avenge, as was well known, though one of  
“them paid for it with his life,—a hard bargain;—  
“to Haethcyn, lord of the Geats, the fight was fatal.  
“Then, at morn, as I have been told, one brother  
2485 “avenged the other on the murderer with the edge  
“of the sword, where Ongentheow met with Eofor;  
“the helm of battle split asunder, faint from a sword-  
“stroke fell the aged Scylfing, his hand remembered  
“feuds enough, it kept not back the fatal blow.”

*(2490—2509) Hygelac gave Beowulf lands and other possessions, and Beowulf repaid him by keeping his sword always at the King's disposal, so that he never needed to hire mercenary officers from abroad. One of Beowulf's exploits was the slaughter of Daeghrefn, a warrior of the Hugas, whom he killed by clasping him in his powerful arms.*

2490 “I requited him the treasures which he had given  
“me, by fighting, by my gleaming sword, as was  
“permitted me; he gave me land, a dwelling-place,  
“the pleasure of possession. There was no need  
“for him that he should have to seek among the  
2495 “Gepidaë or Spear-Danes, or in the Swedish realm,  
“a second-rate campaigner,—to purchase him with

“treasure. For him I would always be to the fore  
 “in the host,—by myself at the front, and so through  
 2500 “life shall do battle, while this sword lasts, which  
 “has often done me service, early and late, since  
 “by valour I became the slayer of Daeghrefn,  
 “champion of the Hugas, by hand. He could not  
 “bring the adornments, the breast-decoration, to the  
 2505 “Frisian king, but he, the standard-bearer, sank in  
 “battle, a noble in prowess; nor was the sword his  
 “slayer, but my unfriendly hug finished his bony  
 “frame, the surgings of his heart.

“Now shall weapon’s edge, hand and hard sword,  
 “do battle for the hoard.”

*(2510—2537) He announces his intention of going forth at once to the fight. He will not eschew armour as he did when fighting Grendel, but will take a shield and corslet because of the fire proceeding from the dragon. He will conquer single-handed or die. His comrades are to keep watch on the barrow.*

2510 Beowulf discoursed,—spoke a last time with words of boasting:—“I ventured on many battles  
 “in my younger days; once more will I, the aged  
 “warrior of the people, seek a combat and acquire  
 “renown, if the destructive miscreant will encounter  
 2515 “me outside his earthy vault.” Then he addressed all of the men, the brave helmet-wearers, his close companions, for the last time. “I would not bear  
 “a sword or weapon against the Reptile, if I knew  
 2520 “how else I might stick to my boast against the  
 “monster, as I did aforetime against Grendel. But

“there I look for hot destructive fire, for blast and  
 “venom, therefore I have upon me shield and  
 2525 “corslet. I will not flee the space of a foot from  
 “the keeper of the mound, but at the rampart it  
 “shall be to us as Wyrð, the portion-giver of every  
 “man, decides. I am eager in spirit, so that I  
 “can forbear from boasting against the wingèd  
 “fighter.

2530 “Watch on the barrow, ye corslet-clad warriors,  
 “in your accoutrements, which of us two can stand  
 “the hacking best, after the desperate onslaught.  
 “That is not your affair, nor a possibility for any  
 “man, save for me alone, to put forth his power  
 2535 “against the monster, and do knightly deeds. By  
 “my valour I will win gold; or war, the dread  
 “bane of life, shall carry off your lord!”

*(2538—2562) He advances to the cave and challenges the dragon. The latter comes forth, spewing flame.*

Then rose the doughty champion by his shield,  
 hardy under his helmet, he went clad in his war-corslet  
 2540 to beneath the rocky cliffs, and trusted to his  
 individual strength—not such is the coward’s way.  
 Then he, who, preëminent in virtues, had lived  
 through many wars,—shocks of battle, when armies  
 dash together,—saw by the rampart a rocky arch  
 2545 erect, whence burst a stream out from the mount;  
 hot was the welling of the flood with deadly fire.  
 He could not any while endure unscorched the  
 hollow near the hoard, by reason of the dragon’s  
 flame.

2550 Then did the chieftain of the Weder-Geats, puffed  
up with rage, let sally forth a word out of his  
breast, stout-heartedly he stormed, his voice, dis-  
tinct in battle, went ringing under the grey rock.  
Hate was enkindled,—the hoard-keeper discerned  
2555 the voice of man. No time was left to seek for  
peace.

First came from out the rock the monster's breath,  
the hot vapour of battle; the earth resounded. Under  
the mount the hero, Geatish lord, raised his shield's  
2560 disc against the gruesome stranger; then was the  
coiled creature's heart impelled to seek the  
contest.

*(2562—2580) Beowulf draws his sword, and  
waits for the dragon's attack. As he comes forward,  
the king deals him a blow with his sword, though  
not such a mighty one as he wished.*

The doughty war-prince had just drawn his sword,  
an ancient relic, quick of edge; in each one of the  
2565 bloody-minded pair was terror at the other. The  
stout-hearted one, the paramount of friends, stood  
by his upright shield, and when the serpent quickly  
coiled itself together, he waited in his armour. The  
fiery one then framed to advance upon him twist-  
2570 ing,—hastened to his fate. The shield gave its good  
shelter to the famous chief in life and limb a  
shorter time than had his longing looked for, if he  
on that occasion, that first day, was to command  
victory in the contest, but Fate did not thus ordain  
2575 for him. The Lord of the Geats swung his hands  
upwards, struck the spotted monster with Ing's

heirloom, so that the brown edge gave way on his bone, and bit less firmly than its warrior-king, driven to straits, required of it.

*(2580—2601) The reptile belches forth more flame, and still the sword fails its owner in his need. He is seen to be in sore straits by his little company, but they retreat, panic-stricken, into a neighbouring wood.*

2580 Then was the warder of the barrow mad in spirit after the hostile stroke, and threw out murderous fire; his weapon-flames flew far and wide. The Geat's free-handed friend crowed not in pride of victory; the bare war-weapon, the blade trusty in  
2585 former times, had failed him in the fray, as it should not have done. That was no pleasant journey, that the famous son of Ecgtheow should have to leave the surface of this earth and occupy  
2590 against his will a dwelling elsewhere;—for so must every man let go his loan of days.

Not long was it before the champions charged each other again. The hoard-possessor nerved himself, his breast heaved with his breathing once  
2595 again; and he who used to rule a nation suffered anguish, hedged about with flame. Never a whit did his right-hand-men, those sons of nobles, stand round him in a body, doing deeds of warlike prowess, but they shrank back into the wood and took care of their lives. The heart of one of them  
2600 alone surged with regrets,—in him who is right thinking nothing can ever set aside the claims of friendship!



## XXXVI

WIGLAF GOES FORWARD TO HELP BEOWULF IN  
HIS EXTREMITY. THE LATTER RECEIVES  
A FATAL WOUND.

[Lines 2602—2693]

(2602—2610) *One of the company, Wiglaf, calling to mind the favours he had had from Beowulf, is struck with remorse, and prepares to join in the fray.*

He was called Wiglaf, son of Weohstan, a much loved shield-warrior, a Scylfing prince, kinsman of Aelfhere. He perceived that his lord and master  
2605 was tortured by the heat, under his battle-mask. Then he called to mind the favour which he had bestowed upon him in time past, the rich dwelling place of the Waegmundings, and all power over the people, just as his father had it; and then he could not forbear; his hand seized the disc, the  
2610 yellow linden-shield, and drew his ancient sword.

(2611—2625) *The history of Wiglaf's sword. Weohstan, his father, had taken it from Onela's nephew Eanmund, whom he had slain. He kept it until his son Wiglaf was grown to man's estate, and then handed it down to him.*

This last was known by mortals as the relic of Eanmund, the son of Ohthere, of whom, when a friendless exile, Weohstan was slayer in fight by edge of sword, and bore off from his line the

2615 brown-hued helmet, the ring-mail corslet and the  
 old gigantic sword, which Onela had given him  
 —his kinsman's war-harness, a battle-outfit ready  
 to his hand. He (Onela) did not speak about the  
 feud, although he had laid low his brother's son.  
 2620 He kept these treasures—sword and corslet—many  
 years, until his son could compass doughty deeds,  
 like his sire did before him. Then when he passed  
 away from life, full of years, on his journey hence,  
 he gave to him among the Geats a countless  
 2625 number of habiliments of war of every kind.

*(2625—2630) This was the first time Wiglaf  
 had fought by the side of Beowulf; his courage was  
 good and his sword proves trusty.*

This was the first occasion on which the young  
 champion was to go through the storm of battle  
 with his ruling lord; his courage did not melt  
 within him, nor did his kinsman's heirloom fail  
 2630 him in the contest; the serpent found that out,  
 when they had come together.

*(2631—2660) Before he goes he rebukes his  
 comrades for their ingratitude and cowardice in the  
 hour of need. For his part, he will share the  
 fortunes of war with his lord.*

Wiglaf spoke many fitting words (sad was his  
 soul) and said to his companions: "I recollect that  
 "time at which we drank the mead, how in the  
 2635 "beer-hall we pledged ourselves to our lord, who  
 "gave us the rings, that we would repay him for

“the war-equipments, the helmets and hard swords,  
 “if any need like this befel him. He who of his  
 “own will chose us among the host for this adven-  
 2640 “ture reminded us of honour, and gave to me these  
 “treasures, because he counted us distinguished  
 “spear-men, gallant helmet-bearers, although he,  
 “our lord, the shepherd of his people, purposed  
 “to achieve this deed of bravery by himself, be-  
 2645 “cause he among men had done the greatest acts  
 “of heroism, daring deeds. Now has the day arriv-  
 “ed, when our liege lord needs the main force of  
 “noble fighting men. Come! let us go to him,  
 “and help our captain, so long as heat, grim fire-  
 2650 “horror may be. As for myself, God knows, far  
 “liefier had I that the flame should swallow up my  
 “body with my gold-giver. To me it does not seem  
 “befitting that we should carry back our bucklers  
 “to our home, unless we may first fell the foe, and  
 2655 “shield the Weder-Geat Lord’s life.

“Full well I know that those were not his long-  
 “earned merits, that he alone of Geatic rank should  
 “suffer this hard fortune,—break down in the fray.  
 “To us shall be in common sword and helmet,  
 2660 “corslet and chased shield.”

(2661—2668) *On joining Beowulf, he encourages  
 him to do his best, and assures him of his help.*

Then plunged he through the deadly reek; went  
 helmeted to help his lord; spoke in few words:  
 “Dear Beowulf, do thy best all round, just as thou  
 “saidst in youthful days, of yore, that thou wouldst  
 2665 “never in thy life cause thy repute to fail; now

“must thou, resolute chief, protect thy life with  
“all thy might, and I will help thee.”

*(2669—2693) The dragon attacks Wiglaf and Beowulf drives his sword Naegling into the monster's head; but it snaps, and the dragon gives him a deadly bite in the neck. The blood gushes out in torrents.*

2670 After these words, the serpent, the fell spiteful spirit, came angrily a second time, bright with belched fire, to fall upon his foes, the loathed mankind. His shield was burnt up to the rim by waves of flame, his corslet could afford the youth-  
2675 ful spear-warrior no help; but the young man did valorously under his kinsman's shield after his own was ruined by hot coals. Then once more the battle-prince was mindful of his reputation, by main force he struck with his battle-sword so that it stuck in the head, driven in by the onslaught.  
2680 Naegling had snapped! Beowulf's old, gray-etched sword had failed him in the fray. That was not granted him,—that iron blades should help him in the fight. The hand was too strong which, so I have heard, by its stroke overstrained every sword,  
2685 —it was no better for him when he bare so wondrous hard a weapon to the fray.

Then a third time the public scourge, the dreadful salamander, was intent on fighting; he  
2690 rushed upon the hero, when occasion favoured him, hot and fierce in battle, and enclosed his whole neck between his cutting jaws; he was bathed in life-blood—the gore gushed out in streams.

## XXXVII

CONTINUATION OF THE FIGHT, AND DEATH OF THE  
 DRAGON. BEOWULF, DYING OF HIS WOUND,  
 ASKS TO SEE THE TREASURE

[Lines 2694—2751]

(2694—2711) *Wiglaf wounds the dragon and the fire from him abates; the king revives for a short time and cuts the reptile asunder.*

I am told that then in the (dire) need of the  
 2695 nation's king, the earl displayed unceasing courage,  
 skill and daring, as was his nature; he recked not  
 about the head, but the brave man's hand was  
 scorched the while he helped his kinsman, so that  
 he, the man in armour, struck the vengeful stranger  
 2700 a little lower down, in such wise that the sword,  
 gleaming and overlaid, plunged in, so that the fire  
 began then to abate.

Then the king himself once more gained sway  
 over his senses, drew the keen battle-sharp death-  
 2705 dirk he wore upon his corslet, and, protector of the  
 Storm-Geats, cut through the reptile in the middle.  
 They had felled the foe, force had driven out his  
 life, and thus they, the kindred nobles, had put an  
 end to him. So should a man and captain be in  
 time of need! That was for the prince the last  
 2710 of triumph-days by his own deeds,—of working in  
 the world.

(2712—2723) *It becomes evident that Beowulf's wound is mortal. Wiglaf bathes it, and undoes his armour.*

Then the wound which erewhile the dragon had afflicted on him began to burn and swell; quickly he found out this—that deadly venom seethed  
 2715 within his breast,—internal poison.

Then the chieftain went on until he sat, still clear in mind, on a seat by the rampart, and gazed on the work of giants—how the primeval earth-dwelling contained within it rocky arches, firm on  
 2720 columns. Then the thane, preëminently good, laved with his hands the famous prince, bloody from battling, his friend and lord, exhausted by the fight, with water, and undid his helmet.

*(2724—2751) Then Beowulf feeling that death is near, grieves that he has no son to whom he may leave his armour. He comforts himself with the thought of his upright life, and asks Wiglaf to bring the treasure out of the cave, that he may have the last joy of gazing on it.*

Beowulf discoursed: after his hurt, his grievous  
 2725 deadly wound, he spoke,—he knew full well that he had spent his measured while of earthly joy,—then was his count of days all passed away, and death incalculably near: “Now should I have wished  
 2730 “to give my son my war-accoutrements, if it had “been so ordained that any heir, issuing from my “body, should come after me. I have ruled over “this people fifty winters; there was not one of the “neighbouring kings who dared encounter me with  
 2735 “his allies in battle,—could weigh me down with “fear. In my own home I awaited what the times “destined for me, kept my own well, did not pick

2740 “treacherous quarrels, nor have I sworn unjustly  
 “many oaths. In all this may I, sick with deadly  
 “wounds, have solace; because the Governor of men  
 “may never charge me with the murder of kinsfolk,  
 “when my life parts from my body.

“Now quickly do thou go, beloved Wiglaf, and  
 “view the hoard under the hoary rock, now that  
 2745 “the snake lies dead,—sleeps sorely wounded and  
 “bereft of treasure. Haste now, that I may see the  
 “ancient wealth, the golden store, may well survey  
 “the bright artistic gems, so that by reason of my  
 2750 “wealth of treasure I may leave life more calmly  
 “and the nation which I ruled over so long.”

## XXXVIII

## THE LAST WORDS AND DEATH OF BEOWULF

[Lines 2752—2820]

(2752—2766) *Wiglaf enters the vault and beholds the treasure, rusted and dull, but of huge value.*

Then, I was told, after these words, the son of Weohstan quickly obeyed his wounded lord, the maimed in fight, and went in his chain-mail, his  
 2755 woven battle-sark, under the barrow's vault. There, proud in triumph, the brave kinsman-thane beheld, when he went by the seat, many a costly ornament—glittering gold lying on the ground, marvels  
 2760 on the wall, and the lair of the reptile, the old twilight-flier,—drinking-cups standing, vessels of bygone races, dingy and of their overlays shorn. There was many a helmet, old and rusty, many

an armlet, twisted with cunning. Treasure, gold  
 2765 in the earth, may easily turn the head of any man,  
 conceal it who will!

*(2767—2782) The cavern is lit up by a wondrous gleaming banner, which Wiglaf carries off, together with a load of goblets and dishes.*

Moreover, he saw, towering above the hoard, a standard all of gold, greatest of marvels wrought by hand, woven with the power of charms. From  
 2770 this a light stood forth, so that he could discern the surface of the ground, and scrutinize the treasures. There was no vestige of the reptile, for the sword had done away with him. Thus I learnt how in the caverned hill one man rifled the hoard, the old-time work of giants, and at his own  
 2775 will loaded his lap with drinking-cups and dishes; also he took the banner, brightest of beacons. The sword of the aged prince (its blade was iron) had before that scotched him who had long been keeper of the treasures, who had for the hoard put forth  
 2780 his burning awe of flame, at midnight fiercely welling out, till by a violent death he died.

*(2783—2793) He hastens back to Beowulf, fearing that he may not find him alive. He is, indeed, at the last gasp, but after being refreshed with water, is able to make a dying speech.*

The emissary hastened, eager for return, impelled by the valuables; anxiety tortured him as to  
 2785 whether he, the brave-minded one, would find the



Storm-Geats' lord alive in the open place where he had left him, shorn of his strength, erewhile. At last he, bearing the treasures, found the famous  
 2790 prince, his lord, bleeding at the last gasp of life. Once more he began to sprinkle him with water, until the beginning of a speech broke forth from the store-house of his mind,—in pain the aged Beowulf spake, and looked upon the gold.

*(2794—2808) Beowulf thanks God that he has been permitted to see the treasure and to have been the means of winning it. He has sacrificed his life in the contest, and he asks that a barrow, to be called Beowulf's barrow, may be raised for a remembrance of him on the cliff.*

“I utter in words my thanks to the Ruler of  
 2795 “all, the King of Glory, the everlasting Lord, for  
 “the treasures which I here gaze upon, in that I  
 “have been allowed to win such things for my  
 “people before my day of death! Now that I  
 “have given the sacrifice of my old life in barter  
 2800 “for the hoard of treasure, do ye henceforth supply  
 “the people's needs,—I may stay here no longer.

“Bid ye war-veterans raise a conspicuous barrow  
 “after the funeral fire, on a projection by the sea,  
 2805 “which shall tower high on Hronesness as a memorial  
 “for my people, so that seafarers who urge their tall  
 “ships over the spray of ocean shall thereafter call  
 “it Beowulf's barrow.”

*(2809—2816) Then he takes off his collar and gives it to Wiglaf, with his helmet, ring and corslet.*

*He will be the last survivor of the Waegmunding family when Beowulf is no more.*

The brave-souled prince undid from off his neck  
 2810 the golden collar, gave it to the thane, the young  
 spear-warrior, and his gold-mounted helmet, ring  
 and corslet,—bade him use them well. “Thou art  
 “the last of our race, the Waegmundings. Fate has  
 2815 “swept all my kinsfolk off, undaunted nobles, to their  
 “doom. I must go after them.”

*(2817—2820) After these words, Beowulf's soul takes its departure.*

That was the veteran's last expression of his  
 spirit's thoughts before the bale-fire was his lot,—the  
 hot destructive flames. His soul departed from his  
 2820 body to journey to the doom of righteous men.

### XXXIX

BEOWULF'S COWARDLY FOLLOWERS COME OUT OF THE  
 WOOD, AND WIGLAF AGAIN REPROACHES THEM  
 AND FORESHADOWS THEIR PUNISHMENT

[Lines 2821—2891]

*(2821—2845) It was a sad day for Wiglaf. True, the dragon was stopped for ever of his mischief, but the beloved king had paid for victory with his life.*

So it went hardly with the younger man, that  
 he beheld the most beloved on the ground, suffering  
 2825 miserably at the end of life. His destroyer, the  
 terrible cave-dragon lay also, bereft of being, over-

whelmed by death. No longer might the curling  
 snake control the hoard of treasures, but iron blades,  
 the hard, battle-dinted result of forging, took him  
 2830 off, so that the far-flier fell motionless from his  
 wounds upon the ground, hard by his treasure-house.  
 Never more did he whirl through the air in sport  
 at midnight, and show his form, proud of his rich  
 2835 belongings, but on the earth he fell by the war-  
 prince's power of hand.

Now this, as I have heard, has sped in but few  
 mighty men, daring though each might be in every  
 sort of deed, that he might rush against the  
 2840 venomous foe's blast or ransack with his hands  
 the hall of rings, if on the mount he found the  
 keeper standing guard.

In Beowulf's case the share of the splendid trea-  
 sures was paid for with death; (but) both had  
 travelled to the end of fitful life.

*(2845—2859) The ten cowards come out of the wood  
 and gaze on Wiglaf and the dead body of the king.*

2845 Not long after was it that the laggards in battle  
 left the wood, ten timorous troth-breakers together,  
 who had just shrunk from wielding their spears in  
 2850 their lord's great need; but in shame they bore  
 their shields and war-harness where the old chief  
 lay, and gazed on Wiglaf. He, the foot-warrior,  
 sat exhausted by the shoulders of his lord, and tried  
 to rally him with water,—but it availed him nothing.  
 2855 He could not keep on earth the chieftain's spirit,  
 much though he wished it, nor alter the will of the  
 Almighty. For men of all degrees God's judgment  
 had to issue in performance, just as it still does now.

(2860—2883) *Wiglaf reproaches the recreants. They have proved themselves unworthy of the armour they wear and the presents they have had from their lord. Beowulf managed to quell the dragon single-handed, with such slight but willing help as Wiglaf could give him.*

- 2860 Then a severe retort came promptly from the youthful hero for such as had erewhile lacked nerve. Wiglaf, the son of Weohstan, spoke out, the youth, sick at heart, looked on the unloved (crew): “Lo!
- 2865 “this can he say who wills to speak the truth;—that  
 “the Lord of men who gave you those costly things,  
 “the war-harness that you stand there in, when he,  
 “the chieftain, gave, on his ale-bench, helmets and  
 “corslets many a time to sitters in hall, his thanes—  
 “such men as he could find anywhere, far or near,
- 2870 “most brave—(that he) completely threw away those  
 “battle dresses,—shockingly, when war befel him. No  
 “reason had the king—not he—to boast about his  
 “comrades in the field; albeit God, master of victories,  
 “accorded him that single-handed he might avenge
- 2875 “himself with the sword, when prowess was required  
 “of him. Poorly was I able to act as body-guard  
 “for him in the fight, and yet I made a start beyond  
 “my power to help my relative; when with the sword
- 2880 “I struck the deadly foe, he ever was the weaker,—  
 “the fire welled forth less strongly from his head.  
 “Too few defenders thronged around the prince,  
 “what time the crisis came for him.”

(2884—2891) *He foreshadows their miserable fate.*

2885 "Now shall all loot-sharing and gifts of swords,  
 "all rights of ownership be hopelessly escheated  
 "from your breed; each mortal of your family will  
 "have to wander, shorn of his citizen-rights, as soon  
 "as nobles far and wide hear of your flight, your  
 2890 "despicable act! Better is death to every one of  
 "noble birth than an inglorious life."

## XL

THE MESSENGER'S REPORT. HE SPECULATES ON  
 THE RESULT OF THE DEATH, IN A  
 HISTORICAL RETROSPECT

[Lines 2892—2945]

(2892—2910) *Wiglaf sends one of the company  
 back to the camp with the sad news, who reports it  
 faithfully; how Beowulf and the dragon are dead  
 and Wiglaf keeps guard by the king's body.*

Then he bade the battle-deed be reported in  
 the entrenchment, up over the sea-cliff, where,  
 depressed in spirit, the band of noble warriors  
 2895 remained, the shield-bearers, in suspense about  
 two things—his death-day and the return of the dear  
 man. Little did he who rode over the headland  
 keep back of the latest tidings,—he told it faithfully  
 2900 among all. "Now lies the joy-giver of the Weder-  
 "Folk, the Geatish Lord, still on his death-bed,—lies  
 "by the dragon's deeds in slaughterous rest. Lies  
 "side by side with him the taker of his life, prostrate  
 "from knife-gashes,—he could not with a sword inflict  
 2905 "a wound in any way upon the monster. Wiglaf,

“the son of Weohstan, sits by Beowulf, the living  
 “noble by the dead; he stands guard over the head  
 “of friend and foe with reverent mien.”

*(2910—2921) The messenger fears that when Beowulf's death is common knowledge, there will be trouble with the Franks and Frisians. The Merovingian dynasty have never been really friendly with the Geats since Hygelac's raid into Friesland.*

2910 “Now there is likelihood for the folk of times  
 “of warfare, soon as the king's fall becomes widely  
 “known among the Franks and Frisians. Hard  
 “fighting was purposed against the Hugs, when  
 2915 “Hygelac arrived with his floating troop on Frisian  
 “land, where the Hetwaras vanquished him in battle,  
 “and bravely brought to pass by their superior  
 “strength that he, armoured chieftain, had to yield;  
 “he fell among his followers,—not a decoration did  
 2920 “that prince give to his captains. Ever since that,  
 “the favour of the Merovingian (king) has been  
 “denied to us.”

EPISODE OF THE BATTLE OF RAVENSWOOD AND  
 DEATH OF ONGENTHEOW

*(2922—2945) Probably there will be an attack by the Swedes also. The Swedish King Ongentheow killed Haethcyn at Ravenswood and avenged the seizure of his queen, but after his victory Hygelac bore down on him with the flower of his army.*

2925 “I do not in the least expect peace or fair dealing from  
 “the Swedish nation; nay, it was common report, that  
 “Ongentheow deprived Haethcyn, the son of Hrethel,

2930 “of his life near Ravenswood, when the warlike Scylfings  
 “first attacked the Geatish people from vainglory.  
 “Quickly did the veteran father of Olthere, old and  
 2935 “terrible, give him a return-blow, killed the sea-king  
 “(Haethcyn) and, though an old man, got him back  
 “his bride, the mother of Onela and Olthere, though  
 “bereft of her gold adornments; and then he followed  
 2940 “his deadly enemies until they escaped, hardly and  
 “without a chief, to Ravenswood. Then with a mighty  
 “army he encompassed those whom the sword had  
 “not despatched, faint from their wounds, and through  
 “the livelong night he often vowed the wretched  
 2945 “band a punishing—said he would get at them by morn  
 “with edge of sword—hang some on gallow-trees as  
 “sport for birds. Once more came help to the sad-  
 “hearted ones with early dawn, when they became  
 “aware of Hygelac’s horn, his trumpet blast,—when the  
 “hero came, bearing down on their track with the  
 “flower of his troops.”

## XLI

THE MESSENGER FINISHES HIS RETROSPECT. THE  
 WHOLE ARMY GOES TO SEE THE PLACE OF THE  
 ENCOUNTER AND THE DEAD KING

[Lines 2946—3057]

*(2946—2960) Ongentheow retreated to a fastness,  
 but was brought to bay by Hygelac and killed by  
 Eofor.*

2950 “The bloody track of Swedes and Geats, the  
 “murderous strife of men, was noticeable far and  
 “wide,—how these nations fostered the feud between  
 “themselves. Then the brave (king), the care-worn  
 “veteran, went with his tribesmen to seek out a  
 “fastness, the lord Ongentheow turned to higher

“ground; he had had experience of Hygelac’s fight-  
 “ing powers, of the proud one’s skill in war,—trusted  
 “not in resistance, that he might withstand the sea-  
 2955 “folk and defend his treasures, children and wife  
 “from the ocean-farers, and so after that the aged  
 “man retreated from thence once more behind an  
 “earth-wall. Then was chase given to the Swedish  
 “folk, the banners of Hygelac overran the fastness  
 2960 “until the Hrethlings pressed on the serried ranks.”

*(2961—2981) His death happened on this wise. Wulf (Eofor’s brother) engaged in a hand-to-hand combat with him, but was nearly killed by a desperate stroke on the head from the king’s sword. Then Eofor dealt him (Ongentheow) a fatal blow.*

“There was the grey-haired Ongentheow brought  
 “to bay by the edges of swords, so that the nation’s  
 “king had to submit to his end at the hands of Eofor  
 2965 “alone. Angrily did Wulf the son of Wonred strike  
 “at him with his weapon, so that at the stroke the  
 “blood spurted from the veins forth under his hair.  
 “Yet was the veteran Scyfling not affrighted, but  
 “quickly paid the deadly blow back with a harder  
 2970 “counter-stroke, as soon as he, the nation’s king, had  
 “turned on him. The active son of Wonred could  
 “not give the return blow to the older man, but he  
 “first clave his helmet on his head, so that he had  
 2975 “to budge, beflecked with gore. He fell to earth; and  
 “still he was not doomed, but he came round, though  
 “the wound punished him.

“Hygelac’s sturdy follower (Eofor) let his broad  
 “blade, his old titanic sword and massive helmet  
 “burst through the wall of shields, the while his  
 “brother lay (prostrate); and then the king bowed  
 2980 “down,—the shepherd of his folk was wounded  
 “mortally.”

*(2982—2998) Eofor strips Ongentheow of his armour and takes the spoil to Hygelac, who requites him and his*



*brother Wulf with rich presents and land, and gives Eofor his only daughter in marriage.*

2985 “Then were there many who bandaged up his brother  
 “(Wulf) and raised him up quickly, when the place  
 “had been evacuated for them, so that they could  
 “control the battle-field. Meanwhile one warrior strip-  
 2990 ped the other, and took from Ongentheow his iron  
 “corslet, his strong and hilted sword and eke his  
 “helmet,—bare to Hygelac the veteran’s harness. And  
 “he received the spoils and honourably promised him  
 “rewards before his men; and he performed it too,—  
 “he, lord of the Geats and son of Hrethel, recompensed  
 “Wulf and Eofor for the charge with copious treasure  
 “when he had got back home, and gave to each of them a  
 2995 “hundred thousand in land and twisted rings;—no man  
 “on earth could blame him for the gifts, since they  
 “(Eofor and Wulf) had earned the honours by fighting,  
 “—and to Eofor he gave his only daughter as pledge  
 “of favour, and to grace his home.”

*(2999—3007) Looking to the above history, the messenger expects an attack from the Swedes directly they hear of Beowulf’s death.*

3000 “Such is the feud and enmity, the deadly hatred  
 “of the men, the Swedish folk, who will attack us,  
 “as I have no doubt, when they have learned our  
 “lord is gone from life, who in the past guarded  
 [3005] “our wealth and nation against enemies, advanced  
 “home government, or more and more achieved  
 “brave deeds.”

*(3007—3030) Let us all go, said he, to take a last look at the king; and then bring him to the*

*funeral pyre. Heaps of blood-bought treasure shall be consumed with him. Now the great captain has gone, many a fair damsel will be carried off into foreign lands, and the raven will gloat over the slain after many a fight.*

“Now speed is best, that we should look upon  
 “the people’s king there, and bring him who gave  
 3010 “us circlets on his way to the funeral pyre. No  
 “solitary object shall be consumed with the man of  
 “mettle; but there is a hoard of treasures, unnum-  
 “bered gold, acquired at terrible cost, and now at  
 “last rings bought with his own life; these shall the  
 3015 “fire eat up, the flames envelop. No earl shall  
 “wear an ornament in his memory, nor shall fair  
 “maiden have a torque-adornment round her neck,  
 “but sad of mood and stripped of jewelry shall  
 “tread the land of exile—often, not merely once,—  
 3020 “now that the army-leader has laid aside laughter,  
 “joy and mirth. Therefore shall many a spear,  
 “chill at morn, be grasped with fingers, lifted by  
 “the hand; no sound of harp shall wake the warriors,  
 3025 “but the ashy raven, busy after doomed men, shall  
 “chatter much, and tell the eagle how it sped him  
 “at the feast, when he together with the wolf laid  
 “bare the slain.”

Thus the brave youth kept talking on sore  
 3030 subjects, nor was he much amiss in facts or  
 words.

*(3030—3057) The whole company go mourning to the scene of the dread contest, and there behold their*

*warrior-king, and by him the dead dragon and the ancient treasures. To Beowulf had God granted to break the spell which hedged the riches round!*

The whole band rose; they went sadly, with welling tears, by Earnanaes to see the wondrous sight. There they found on the sand, lifeless, keeping his helpless bed, him who in times past  
3035 gave them rings; there had the hero's last day gone, in which the warrior-king, the Storm-Geats' prince, had died his wondrous death. But first they saw a stranger being there,—the odious reptile,  
3040 lying on the plain there opposite. The fiery dragon, a grisly horror, was with glowing embers scorched. Fifty measured feet long was it as it lay; sometimes by night it used to occupy the gladsome air; then it came down again to seek its den;—  
3045 and there it was, rigid in death; it had inhabited the last of its earth-caves. Goblets and flagons by it stood, dishes there lay and precious swords, rusty and eaten through, as if they had lodged  
3050 there a thousand winters in earth's bosom. At that time the mighty heritage, the gold-store of men of old, was hedged round with a spell, that no man might touch the treasure-chamber, had not  
3055 God himself, true king of victories, (he is the shield of men) granted to whom he would to open the hoard, even to such a man as seemèd meet to him.

## XLII

REFLECTIONS ON THE INSCRUTABILITY OF FATE.  
PREPARATIONS FOR THE FUNERAL

[Lines 3058—3136]

(3058—3075) *The future is shrouded in mystery. This adventure was the death of Beowulf;—and yet he was not greedy after gold.*

Then it was manifest that the way of them who had unrighteously concealed the treasure under the  
 3060 rock-wall had not prospered. The keeper had at first killed off some few; and then the feud was savagely avenged. It is ever a mystery in what place a noble of brave repute may have to meet his fortunes' end,—when the man may occupy  
 3065 no longer the mead-hall with his kinsmen. With Beowulf thus it was, when he sought out the keeper of the mount, and deadly conflicts—he knew not by what means his parting from the world should happen. So the great chiefs who put  
 3070 that (treasure) there had laid on it a deep curse until doomsday, that the man who should trespass on that ground should be guilty of sin, be shut up in idol-temples, bound in hell-bonds and visited with plagues. Yet he (Beowulf) was not eager  
 3075 after gold, foremost and first for his lord's favour had he looked.

(3076—3100) *Wiglaf again bewails the calamity which has fallen upon the people. He speaks of*

*the old king's last moments, and of his wish that a conspicuous barrow should be erected in his memory.*

Wiglaf, son of Weohstan, spoke:—"Often must  
 "many a noble suffer misery through the will of  
 "one, as it has happened to us. We could not  
 3080 "instil any advice into the dear prince, the guardian  
 "of his kingdom,—that he should not attack the  
 "keeper of the gold, but let him lie where he had  
 "long time been,—rest in his quarters till the world's  
 "end. We have received the fate appointed from  
 "on high! The hoard is open to view (but) terribly  
 3085 "acquired,—too cruel was the fate the nation's king  
 "there tempted. I was within, and scanned it all,—  
 "the treasures of the chamber,—when it was granted  
 "me; not by any means was the journey under the  
 3090 "earth-wall allowed me in friendly wise. I grasped  
 "hastily with my hands a great o'erwhelming load  
 "of hoarded treasures,—bore it out hither to my king:  
 "he was then still alive, conscious and sound in mind;  
 3095 "the old man said many things in his distress,—  
 "told me to greet you, bade you form, appropriately  
 "to your champion's deeds, a lofty barrow at the  
 "bale-fire spot, great and conspicuous, for that he was  
 "of men on the wide earth the worthiest warrior so  
 3100 "long as he was suffered to enjoy the riches of a court."

*(3101—3109) He invites the company to have a last look at the heap of treasures, while a bier is being got ready for the king's body.*

"Come now and let us haste to see once more  
 "and scan the heap of cunning treasures, a wondrous

“sight under the (rocky) wall! I will direct you,  
 3105 “that you may see the rings and thick gold near  
 “enough. Let the bier be quickly made ready when  
 “we come out, and then let us carry our lord, the  
 “beloved man, to where he shall wait long in the  
 “keeping of the Almighty.”

*(3110—3119) He requisitions wood from the neighbouring notables, wherewith to kindle the funeral pyre of the great warrior-chief who had taken part in so many battles.*

3110 Then Weohstan's son, the hero bold in battle,  
 bade orders be given to many castle-owning nota-  
 bles, that they, having retainers, should fetch firing-  
 wood from far to where the brave chief was. “Now  
 “shall hot coals consume, the lurid flame tower  
 3115 “round the strong support of warriors, who often  
 “braved the shower of darts, when a storm of  
 “arrows, forced from the strings, quivered above  
 “the wall of shields; when the shaft did its office,  
 “and urged forth the barb, sped by its feather-  
 “gear.”

*(3120—3136) Seven thanes are chosen out to carry away the treasures from the cave. They push the dragon over the cliff and load a waggon with the valuables. The body of Beowulf is also borne away to the promontory on which the bale-fire is to be lit.*

3120 And so the wise son of Weohstan called from  
 out the band the picked thanes, seven all told, of

the king,—and they eight went under the foeman's vault; one warrior who went in front, bore in his  
 3125 hand a flaming torch. Who should then spoil the hoard was not arranged by lot, as soon as the warriors saw any part of it remain unguarded in the chamber and lie perishing; little did any reck  
 3130 that hurriedly they carried off the costly treasures. Also they shoved the dragon, that reptile, over the cliff-wall,—let the waves take the treasure-warder, the flood enfathom him. There was an altogether  
 3135 countless store of twisted gold, loaded upon a wagon; and the prince, the hoary warrior, was borne away to Hronesness.

## XLIII

## THE FUNERAL OF BEOWULF

[Lines 3137—3182]

*(3137—3155) The Geats make a funeral pyre, placing the body of their lord in the midst of a heap of armour, and set fire to it. The roaring of the flames mingles with the weeping of the people.*

The people of the Geats then made ready for him on the ground a firm-built funeral pyre, hung round with helmets, battle-shields, bright corslets,  
 3140 as he had begged them to. Then the sad men-at-arms laid in its midst the famous prince, their much-loved lord. The warriors then began to kindle on the mount the greatest of bale-fires; the swarthy  
 3145 wood-smoke towered above the blazing mass; the roaring flame mixed with the noise of weeping—

the raging of the winds was stilled—till it had crumbled up the bony frame, hot to its core. Depressed in soul, with moody care, they mourned  
 3150 their lord's decease. Moreover, the aged woman, with hair bound up, [sang] a doleful dirge [and said] repeatedly that she [greatly feared] evil days for herself, much carnage, the dread of [warriors,  
 3155 humiliation and captivity].

Heaven swallowed up the smoke.

*(3156—3168) Then they constructed a barrow, covering in the remains, and upon it they placed the riches they had taken from the hoard.*

Then people of the Storm Geats raised a mound upon the cliff, the which was high and broad and visible from far by voyagers on sea, and in ten days they built the veteran's beacon.

3160 The remnant of the burning they begirt with a wall in such sort as skilled men could plan most worthy of him. On the barrow they placed collars and fibulae—all such adornments as brave-minded  
 3165 men had previously taken from the hoard. They left the wealth of nobles to the earth to keep,—(left) the gold in the ground, where it still exists, as unprofitable to men as it had been before.

*(3169—3182) Twelve chieftains ride round the barrow, lamenting their king in a dirge and praising him for his manliness, his mildness and his longing to be worthy of men's praise.*

Then the brave in battle, sons of nobles, twelve  
 3170 in all, rode round the barrow; they would lament



their loss, mourn for their king, utter a dirge, and speak about their hero. They revered his manliness, extolled his noble deed with all their  
3175 might;—so it is meet that man should praise his friend and lord in words, and cherish him in heart when he must needs be fleeting from the body and go forth.

Thus did the people of the Geats, his hearth-companions, mourn the downfall of their lord and  
3180 said that he had been a mighty king, the mildest and the gentlest of men, and keenest after praise.

## THE FIGHT AT FINNSBURG

“... [THESE] are never gables burning!” Then  
spake the young and warlike king—“This is no  
“dawning from the east, nor here does any dragon  
“fly, nor here do this hall’s gables burn, but forth  
5 “they bring the boar-crest, birds (of battle) sing,  
“the grey corslet rattles, there is din of spear,  
“shield answers to shaft. Now shines the errant  
“moon beneath the clouds. Now begin evil deeds,  
“which will call forth the rancour of this folk.  
10 “But wake ye now, my men of war, hold fast your  
“shields, think of brave deeds, fight in the front,  
“be stout of heart!”

Then arose many a thane, bedight with gold,  
and girded on his sword. Then to the doors two  
15 noble warriors went, Sigferth and Eaha, and drew  
their swords, and at the other doors Ordlaif and  
Guthlaif; and Hengest himself turned him upon their  
track. Moreover, Garulf exhorted Guthere, that he  
20 would not lead so noble a life at the first onset to  
the chamber doors in armour, now that the man  
hardy in battle purposed to take it; forasmuch  
as he, the valiant warrior, asked clearly over all,  
WHO HELD THE DOOR?

“Sigferth is my name,” quoth he, “I am prince  
25 “of the Secgs, a well-known rover. Many troubles,  
“hard conflicts, have I passed through; here is

“ordained for thee whatever thou thyself dost try  
“on me.”

Then in the hall was sound of carnage; the  
30 keel-shaped shield in heroes' hands must burst the  
boar-helmet. The house-floor dinned, till in the  
fight Garulf lay prone, first of all mortals, Guthlaf's  
son, and by him many heroes. A crowd of foemen  
35 fell; the raven hovered, swarthy and sallow-brown;  
a sword gleam shone, as if all Finnsburg were on  
fire. Never have I heard tell in mortal strife of  
sixty conquering fighters bearing themselves better  
and more worthily, nor ever swains pay better for  
40 the luscious mead than did his liegemen yield re-  
turn to Hnaef. Five days they fought, and of their  
followers fell not one, although they held the doors.  
Then did the wounded chief retire and went away,—  
said that his coat of mail was broken through, his  
45 armour unavailing and his helmet pierced, as well.

Then straightway the shepherd of the people  
asked him how the warriors got over their wounds,  
or which of the youths . . . .



## NOTES

4. *Scyld of the Sheaf*. (See Scyld in Index of Proper Names). So Earle, who says "not 'Scyld the son of Scaf' . . . . . According to the original form of the story, Scéaf "was the foundling, he had come ashore in a boat with "a sheaf of corn, and from that was named. This form "of the story is preserved in Ethelwerd and William of "Malmesbury. But here the foundling is Scyld, and we "must suppose he was picked up with the sheaf, and hence "his cognomen." Cp. Möller, *Das Altenglische Volksepos*, p. 43 *et seq.*; G. Binz, PB. XX, 147 *et seq.* and Sievers, *Saxo*, p. 176.

6. *The noble inspired awe*. Here, as elsewhere, I have followed Wyatt's text (egsode eorl) in my translation. But Kemble's emendation (egsode eorlas) recently supported by Sievers (*Saxo* 188) and Trautmann (*Bonner Beiträge zur Anglistik* II, 124) is much to be preferred. The translation would then run *He overawed the earls*, etc. . . .

70. *A festive chamber greater than etc. Lit.* A great festive-chamber, [greater] than *etc.* (See *Anglia* XI, 459).

71. *Except dominion and the lives of men*. Cosijn (*Aant.* 2) would reject this line as spurious. Earle thinks it may have been a corrective insertion, intended to bring the passage in line with the constitutional principles of the interpolator's time. Is it possible that we have here a dramatic ending similar to the  $\kappa\alpha\iota\ \psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\theta\epsilon\acute{\omega}\pi\omega\nu$  of Revelations XVIII, 13?

75. *Middle-earth*. The following explanation of this expression, as contained in the Icelandic Edda, is quoted from Cleasby and Vigfusson's Dictionary *s.v.* miðgarðr:— "The earth (miðgarðr), the abode of men, is seated in "the middle of the universe, bordered by mountains and "surrounded by the great sea (úthaf); on the other side "of this sea is the Útgarð, (*out-yard*) the abode of giants; "the Miðgarð is defended by the 'yard' or 'burgh'

“Ásgarð (the burgh of the Gods) lying in the middle  
“(the heaven being conceived as rising above the earth).”

82. *Wide-gabled. Lit.* ‘horn-wide’, *i.e.* wide between the horns which decorated the gables. (Riddle LXXXV.) There is a good note by Miller in *Anglia* (XII, 396).

84. *Twixt son-in-law and father-in-law, i.e.* between Ingeld and Hrothgar. See the episode of Freawaru, ll. 2024—2069).

123. *Thirty thanes.* Of these he devoured fifteen on the spot, and carried off fifteen to his lair. (See ll. 1579—1584).

158. *A brilliant rescue from the murderer's hands.* This is the best sense to be got out of an obscure passage, but it is questionable whether ‘rescue’ is legitimate as a translation of ‘bōte’. From = ‘tō’ can be justified, cp. l. 2922.

168. *He might not however . . . purpose.* We may perhaps compare Hamlet IV, 5, 123.

“There’s such divinity doth hedge a king,  
“That treason can but peep to what it would,  
“Acts little of his will.”

Pogatscher, (*PB.* XIX, 544) reads ‘formetode’ (one word), in l. 169, from an assumed verb ‘\*formetian’ (despise), and translates “nicht durfte er dem gabenstuhl (Hrothgars) nahen, das gast geschenk verschmähte er, “und trug kein verlangen darnach.” But this does not explain why Grendel should not *be able* to approach the throne.

Sarrazin (*Anglia* XIX, 369) suggests that the ‘giftöl’ was a (heathen) altar, and the ‘maððum’ an idol. But why should Grendel be prevented by God from approaching that? At the same time it must be admitted that ‘nor did he know His purpose’ is a very doubtful rendering. The purpose is assumed to be God’s purpose to destroy Grendel.

Trautmann (*Bonner Anglistik* II, 135) says ‘hē’ = Hrothgar and suggests that a line has dropped out before 168, in order to get over the objection that the preceding lines clearly refer to Grendel.

204. *Looked for favorable omens.* ‘Augury and divination by lot no people practise more diligently’, (Tacitus, *Germania* trans. *Church and Brodribb*, ch. 10).

212. *The currents churned the sea against the sand.* Cp. Andreas, ll. 424, 425. 'Sand is geblonden, grund wið grēote!'

226. *Their corslets, their battle-dress rattled.* Earle translates, "They shook out their sarks, their war-weeds."

240, 241. *A ring-prowed bark hither over the seas. I have been (acting as) coast-guard; I kept...* Half of line 240, and perhaps the beginning of line 241 is wanting. Wyatt follows Wülker's conjecture, and the above is my translation of the reading. But the tenses are very awkward, and I prefer Sievers' emendation (*Anglia* XIV, 145) 'Hwæt! Ic hwile waes...' i.e. 'Lo! I have been coast-warder a long time...', Socin adopts this, without the 'Hwæt!' in his sixth edition.

245. *Pass-word*, so Earle.

249. *Stay-at-home.* This is Grein's idea; but it may very well be that 'seldguma' = an ordinary person (Heyne-Socin), or a retainer (Bugge). Is it possible that we should read 'Is' instead of 'Nis', so that seldguma would mean an extraordinary, or distinguished person? (Cp. the other compounds of seld-). The word 'is' begins a second half-line at vv. 375, 476.

261. *Hearth-companions* should be *hearth-companions*.

303. *Boar-images.* The image of a boar, often placed on the front of the helmets among East Germanic tribes (see Illustrations, Fig. 3) was connected with the worship of Freyr, to whom the boar was sacred. "They worship the mother of the gods, and wear as a religious symbol the device of a wild boar. This serves as armour and as a universal defence, rendering the votary of the god—dess safe even amidst enemies." Tacitus, *Germania* chap. 45 (trans. Church and Brodribb). See also Stopford Brooke, *Hist. Early English Lit.* Vol. I, pp. 178, 179 and Earle, *Deeds of Beowulf*, p. 111.

334. *Visored helmet.* Visors, in the strict (technical) sense were unknown in Beowulf's time, but the face was protected by a kind of mask, such as that appearing on the silver helmet found in the Thorsbjerg Moss (South Jutland), figured at p. 122 of Sophus Müller's *Nordische Altertumskunde*.

342. Beowulf perhaps means literally 'Bee-wolf', = 'wolf or ravager of bees', = 'bear'. Cp. 'beorn' = 'hero', originally 'bear'; and 'bēohata' 'warrior', in Caedmon,—literally the bee-hater or persecutor, and hence identical with 'bēowulf'. Sweet, *First Anglo-Saxon Reader*.

350. *Powers should be prowess.*

378. *Who carried thither costly presents for the goodwill of the Geats* 'Gēata' in Wyatt's text is taken as = 'Gēatum'. Cosijn suggests that 'ðyder' should read 'hyder' and the Geats be thus the present-bringing people. (*Aant.* p. 7).

390. *Brought word within.* This should be *brought out word from within.*

420. *Five, i.e. giants or monsters.*

438. *A yellow buckler.* The shields consisted of a framework of yellow linden wood, over which skins were stretched.

445. *To cover my head.* Konrath (HA. XCIX, 417) says this should be understood literally, as referring to the ancient Scandinavian and English custom of covering the head of a corpse with a cloth.

471. "They are particularly delighted by gifts from neighbouring tribes, which are sent not only by individuals but also by the state; such as choice steeds, heavy armour, trappings and neck-chains." Tacitus, *Germania* XV. Cp. lines 1860—3.

490. *Thy mind, thy war-fame unto men.* So Morris-Wyatt. Cosijn takes 'Sigehrēðsecgum' as one word (= to 'Hrēðmonnum'—unto the victorious Danes). (*Aanteekeningen* 10). Trautmann, (*Bonner Anglistik* II, 154) suggests that 'meoto' is acc. pl. of 'met' (otherwise 'gemet') in the sense of 'measure, rule' and 'sigehrēð' an adjective. He translates "und löse, du siegberühmter, den männern die regel, wie dich der geist treibt." But 'relax the rules' seems an odd way for a king to tell his guest not to stand upon ceremony (for which 'ðēaw' is the appropriate word); and those who believe 'sigehrēð' to be a noun can point to the analogy of 'gūðhrēð' (819) and to the existence in Beowulf itself of the adj. 'sigehrēðig'.



517. *Seven nights*, or, as Earle has it, 'a se'nnight', Cp. Tacitus. 'Instead of reckoning by days, as we do, they reckon by nights'. *Germania* XI.

525. *A worse fatality*. Rieger and Trautmann (*Bonner Anglistik* II, 155) are almost certainly right in reading 'geðinges' instead of 'geðingea' here. I have also followed the latter in the translation of 'grimre gūðe' (527) by 'in gruesome war'.

572. *Often Wyrð saves an doomed earl when his courage is good*. Cp. *Andreas* 459, 460. 'This is much like the sentiment of Nello in *Romola*, "Paternosters may shave clean, but they must be said over a good razor." Other and more sober parallels may be found in MLN. VIII (2), 117.

623. *Proffered the costly goblet*. Here we apparently have an epic formula for handing round the cup. Banning, *Die Epischen Formeln in Beowulf*, p. 5.

665. *King of glory*. *Lit.* glory of kings. I think this must refer to God, and not to Hrothgar. Cp. *Elene* 5 and *Judith* 155.

677. *In fighting-power*. Trautmann (*Anglistik* II, 161) suggests 'an herewæpnum' ('armed').

696. *The Lord gave weaved-fortune of success in war*. There is here a curious mixture of Christian and heathen thought. It was the Valkyrie who, in Northern mythology, wove the woof of victory. See the Edda, and Gray's *Fatal Sisters*.

707. *To the shades below*. *Lit.* under the shadow.

740. *A sleeping warrior, i.e. Hondscio*—see v. 2076.

768. *The Danes, the castle-dwellers*. The Danes were not sleeping in the Hall. cp. v. 138.

796. *They wished to protect the life of their lord*. See note to vv. 1246—1250.

817. *A wound past remedy*. *Lit.* a perpetual wound.

836. *By the spacious roof*. Not inside, but by or under

the wide gable-end of the roof. See Miller, in *Anglia* XII, 397, whose alteration from 'hrōf' to 'horn' is, however, unnecessary (Cosijn, *Aant.*).

852. *There Hell received him.* "This exactly expresses "the personality and the business of the dark goddess "Hel. If the line be Christian, the personality of Hel "seems a remnant of the old belief." Stopford Brooke, *History of Early Eng. Lit.* I, 54. So Earle translates, "There did Hela receive him." But the whole passage is almost certainly Christian ('his heathen soul' comes in the same line in the original) like the other passages in which the word Hell occurs (101, 588, 788, 1274, 3072).

858. *Between the seas.* The North Sea and the Baltic?

870. *Framed a new story, founded upon fact.* Others, e.g. Arnold, Cosijn, and Simons (*Beowulf vertaald in stafrým*, pp. 184, 320,) think 'word . . . gebunden' refer to metrical form. See Earle *Deeds of Beowulf*, p. 136. [Since my translation was made I have observed that Trautmann renders 'sōðe gebunden' similarly. *Bonner Anglistik* II, 173].

897. *Fire consumed the dragon.* Scherer's reading 'hāte' (adopted in Holder's text) is preferable; we can then translate 'the dragon dissolved with heat.'

902. No satisfactory explanation of the abrupt transition from Sigemund to Heremod has yet been put forward. The two names appear side by side in the Older Edda (Hyndluljóð) as Dederich and Heinzel have pointed out, but we can infer nothing more than that they had got connected in some way in ancient lays or sagas,—perhaps as heroes of similar adventures. (Sievers, *Saxo* 180).

915. *Treachery befell him, i.e. Heremod.*

916. *Fallow streets.* Cosijn's emendation 'fealwum' for 'fealwe'—so that fallow will qualify horses (917) instead of streets (cp. line 865) is good. (*Aant.* 16).

926. *Stood on the threshold.* This follows Earle ('stood on the staple'), Miller (*Anglia* XII, 399) shows that Ags. stapol = French *perron*, and says, "Hrothgar delivers his "speech from the steps leading up to the hall, or the "landing at the top of the flight."

983. *Over the lofty roof.* See Miller's article in *Anglia* (just quoted).

996. *Who have an eye for such things.* Earle's translation.

1008. *Shall sleep after the banquet, sc. of life.* Several parallels are given by Prof. A. S. Cook in *MLN* (IX, (8) 474) beside that quoted by Prof. Earle from Milton's piece about the University Carrier.

1032. *Survivances of filing (i.e. swords) hard in the storm of battle* ('scūrheard'). So Arthur Palmer in *MLN*. VIII, 122. Earle translates 'war-scoured' and a number of other conjectures are collected in *MLN*. VII (7) 385, and VII (2) 172, where Pearce suggests "annealed with cold water" (see also 505). At p. 121 of Vol. VIII. J. M. Hart proposes 'cutting like a storm'.

1035. *Eight horses.* Of these he gave four to Hygelac (2163) and three to Hygd (2174).

1038. *Adorned with jewels.* Earle suggests that 'sinc' should here be translated 'silver'. But if 'sinc' does not everywhere = 'treasure, valuable, precious object, jewel' in *Beowulf*, it is almost certainly equivalent to gold. See 1485, 6, and 2764, 5.

1056—7. *Had not the wise God and the courage of the man.* Cp. line 572, and note.

1064. *Concerning Healfdene's warlike chieftain.* It is very doubtful whether *Ags.* 'fore' will bear the meaning of 'about'; but there seems no choice but to translate thus or to reject the passage (*Cosijn, Aanteekeningen* p. 18), or at any rate the word 'Healfdenes'—for which Trautmann (*Anglistik* II, 183) suggests 'Hrōðgāres', taking 'hildewisan' as plural (= hildewisum).

1116. *Their bodies*—lit. their bone-vats. Cp. *Mod. Eng.* a 'bag of bones.'

1130. *He might not guide.* Read *albeit he might not guide.*

1142—1144. *Hence he did not escape the fate of mortals, when the son of Hunlaf,* etc. Earle translates: "So (the

"better to hide his thought), he did not decline military "brotherhood [worodrædenne], when Hun laid upon his "breast (the sword) Lafing, luminary of battle, best of "blades." [The words in parentheses are not in the original.] This follows Bugge (PB. XII, 32—37) who takes Hun as = Hun of *Widsith* l. 33, and Lafing as the name of the sword which Hun laid upon Hengest's breast as a sign that he was Finn's man. This attributes gross treachery to Hengest, and although ingenious seems to me too far-fetched. Interesting observations on this point by Hugo Schilling are contained in MLN. (I, 178, and II, 291).

Heyne (ed. 4) keeps the 'worodrædenne' of the MS. and takes Hunlafing as the name of the sword. The sense would then be—"Meanwhile he did not neglect the "usual customs of the world, when he (= Finn) laid "upon his shoulder Hunlafing, that gleaming weapon, etc...." But in editions 5 and 6 Heyne-Socin adopt Bugge's version.

1201. *Chose eternal gain, i.e.* entered upon a religious life? (Bugge), or died and went to heaven? (Heyne). Cp. lines 1759—60, and 2469.

1212. *Less able warriors, i.e.* the Geats were the better men, and had only given in to superior numbers.

1213. *By the chance of battle, 'by the fortune of war'* Earle.

1231. *And warriors primed with wine perform my bidding.* I have supposed this line not to form a separate sentence, but to belong to the same sentence as the preceding one. With Wyatt's (and the usual) punctuation the translation must be 'ye warriors elate with wine, do as I bid!' But what are they to do? Ettmüller says it is an invitation to drink. Sievers alters 'dōð' to 'do' and says the injunction is addressed to Beowulf. Kluge alters 'is' in line 1228 to 'sī' (sȳ). Simons puts a comma after 'swa' (Do likewise, I bid you!) But the queen has just said that they already do these things, in the previous lines. I do not look on my translation as an ideal one, but it seems possible that Wealhtheow might be wishing to draw attention to her own hospitality by the word 'druncne'.

1246—1250. Cp. Tacitus.—"They transact no public or private business without being armed," *Germania* XIII,

“To defend, to protect him (*i.e.* the chief) . . . is the height of loyalty. The chief fights for victory, the vassals fight for their chief,” *ib.* XIV. “They go armed to business, or no less often to their festal meetings”. *ib.* XXII.

1303. *The well-known hand.* This is commonly assumed to refer to Grendel's hand. But why should it not be Aeschere's? Cp. 1343, and note that nothing is said later on in the poem about Grendel's hand being taken away, or found at the mere.

1305. *On both sides.* The last victim was a Geat; now it is a Dane. “These allusions to the old Germanic system of establishing a definite pecuniary compensation for every injury, including loss of life, are common in [Ags.] poetry.” Sweet. See also Tacitus, *Germania* XXI.

1392—1394. *He.* Grendel's parent is usually referred to as ‘she,’ in accordance with line 1351; but the idea seems to be that strict notions of sex are inapplicable to such monsters (cp. 1355).

1489. *Wavy sword, i.e.* sword with a wavy pattern etched on it. See under ‘Sword’ in the Index of Things. Heyne-Socin translates “ponderous sword.”

1492. The fight of Beowulf with Grendel's mother should be compared with the story of the Troll-wife in the Old Norsk Grettis-Saga (good analysis in SB. i, 122—131) and with that in the Saga of Ormr Storolfsson.

1505. *Linkèd mail-shirt. Lit.* ‘locked’ *i.e.* composed of interlocked rings.

1507. *Ring-clad lord. Lit.* lord of rings = clad in ring-mail? or bountiful prince? “jewelled prince” Earle.

1512. Stopford Brooke has an ingenious theory about the home of the sea-monster. He says (pp. 63, 64 of *Hist. Early Eng. Lit.*) “This cave under the sea seems to be “another of those natural phenomena of which the writer “had personal knowledge (line 2135) and which was introduced by him into the mythical tale to give it a “local colour. There are many places of this kind. Their “entrance is under the lowest level of the tide. The “diver plunges, and rising through the water, finds himself in a high arched cavern, with a sloping beach of

“sand, up which the water flows to the level of the tide. “But beyond the level of the tide the cavern, covered “with fine dry sand, extends inland under the rocks, lit “and aired by crevices in the roof which penetrate to “the outer surface of the cliff” . . . . . “All the statements “in the account confirm this conjecture. Beowulf and “Grendel’s dan, close embraced, dive upwards into the “cave. When they get in they are in ‘a sea hall where “water is not’. On the walls of the cave are hung “weapons; there is a rocky couch in it, and treasures “lying about; and the fight is conducted on the dry “sand, under a lofty roof. There is firelight, but I think “when we look at all that is said of this light, the writer “meant that the light was like fire, and that in reality “he thought of the pale daylight that filtered through “the rocks above” . . . . .

All this seems very doubtful. Lines 1515, 1516 point to the roof of the chamber keeping off the water above it from entering in. Then again the expression ‘under gynne grund’ in line 1551 does not fall in with the scheme, nor do lines 1656 (*wigge under wætere*) and 2100 (*meregrund gefēoll*).

It may be added that there is no place at the southern end of the Roskilde Fjord or Issefjord which presents, or looks as if it could ever have presented, such characteristics as Stopford Brooke’s theory requires.

1543. *She overthrew the strongest of warriors, of foot-combatants.* I have adopted Cosijn’s view that ‘oferweorpan’ is not intransitive here, but = to overthrow. Instead of the ‘fēðecempa’ of the MS. I suggest the gen. pl. ‘fēðecempna’, and have translated accordingly.

1556. *After he had got up again.* So Cosijn, who points out that God helped B. by showing him the sword on the wall. l. 1662.

1567. *Bone-rings; i.e. vertebræ, not ribs.*

1600. *The ninth hour, i.e. 3 p.m.*

1604. *They knew and did not expect.* This is literal, but evidently there is something wrong here. [*witon* = *wiscton* (they wished) has been suggested, but ‘ond’ does not seem adversative enough after it].

1642. *Among them.* Not *with* (i.e. in addition to) them,

for there were only fourteen besides B, to begin with (see line 207) and one—Hondscio—had been killed.

1728. *Sometimes He lets . . . stock.* So Cosijn *Aant.* 26. See as to this passage (1722—1757) Sz. pp. 103, 104.

1745—1747. *Under his armour etc.* Müllenhoff, who assigns this passage to a Christian interpolator, thinks he had in mind Ephesians VI, 16.

1766. *Glance of eyes will mar and darken all.* This is Earle's translation, who here sees a reference to the superstition, not yet extinct, of the evil eye.

1815. *High seat.* Not 'daïs' (Earle);—see the description of a Royal Hall in the Index of Things, s.v. *House.*

1825. *Ready I'll be at once for warlike deeds.* I have taken 'gūðgeweorca' as genitive after 'gears' as at line 2118.

1860—3. See note to line 471.

1944. *Kinsman of Hemming.* Not Eomaer here (as at 1961), but Offa.

1968. *Slayer of Ongentheow.* Not by his own hand, but by that of his follower Eofor.

2021. *From end to end.* So Earle. Not 'at the end' (Garnett, Morris-Wyatt); see the description of a Royal Hall in the Index of Things, s.v. *House.*

2035. *That his high lords should wait upon a noble scion of the Danes.* I follow Wyatt (note on p. 86 of his edition of *Beowulf*) in taking 'duguða' (pl.) as nominative to 'biwenede' (sing.).

2051. *When Withergyld lay low.* Withergyld occurs as a proper name at line 124 of *Widsith*, but if, as is possible, Withergyld is not here the name of a person read 'when reprisals failed.'

2067. *Hence I count not etc.* This suspicion was justified by later events, as we see from *Widsith*, lines 45—49. "Ingeld *did* go to war with Hrothgar his father-in-law, to "avenge his father's death. The warriors of the Heatho-

"beardnas came... and attacked Hrothgar in his hall. "But the King, though old, was still dreadful. Hrothulf, "his nephew, whom we hear of in the poem, was faithful, and they stood bravely to their arms for the homestead. The Heathobearnas were pushed back to the "sea, and Ingeld was slain." SB., i. 96, 97.

2153. *A gray corslet, i.e. of shining steel.* Wülker (*Anglia Anzeiger VIII, 169*) suggests that 'hār' here means plain, unadorned, not ornamented with gold. But this seems an unlikely epithet for a royal present and does not agree with line 1028.

2157. *That... I should acquaint thee of his friendly feeling, saying* (lit. 'and said'). This follows Schröer's excellent suggestion (*Anglia XIII, 342*). Holder's reading would mean, "that I should repeat to thee about its origin."

2186. *Captain of war-hosts.* I like Cosijn's emendation 'drihten Wedera' (captain of the Weders, *i.e.* Geats).

2252. *They saw (the last of) festive joy.* Earle translates 'they attained the joy of the (supernal) hall' following Heyne-Socin, who says the passage 'scheint sich, dem Zusammenhange nach, auf den Jubel im himmlischen Saale zu beziehen'. (Glossary to their ed. of *Beowulf*, s.v. *seledrēam*).

2288. *He sniffed the scent along the rock.* So Earle.

2333. *The water-washed land.* Cosijn suggests that the fastness may have been surrounded by water. (*Aant. 34*). We know, however, (line 1924) that the king's residence was near the sea, and I think that is as far as we are justified in going. Sievers (*Saxo*, p. 184) seems to have insufficient grounds for assuming that Beowulf's castle must have been on an island—the same one as that on which the dragon lived in the parallel passage in *Saxo* (Bk. II, p. 61 *et seq.*).

2438. *His lord and friend.* If the reading here (*frēawine*) is correct, we must look on the word as used proleptically. If he had lived, Herebeald would have been over Haethcyn as king.

2441. *A gratuitous onset.* Perhaps this should be 'an



onset without compensation' (cp. note to line 1305), but on that view line 2444 seems very weak.

2477. *Across the lakes, i.e.* those on the borders between Sweden and Geatland (lake Wener, etc)? But the word 'heafo,' (supposed plural of 'hæf') is very doubtful. See Sz. pp. 27, 28 and A. 83, on the passage.

2479. *My friendly relatives, i.e.* his uncles Haethcyn and Hygelac.

2504. *The breast decoration.* "The necklace is here referred to which Beowulf received as a present from Wealhtheow (1197, 2175) and subsequently gave to Hygd (2173), and which is in the possession of her husband Hygelac after line 1203" (?) Heyne-Socin.

2547. *He could not any while endure unscorched the hollow near the hoard.* This translation retains the obscure MS. reading 'dēop.' Earle, following Grundtvig and Bugge, reads 'dēor,' and translates "nigh to the hoard could not the hero unscorched any while survive."

2570. *Hastened to his fate.* If, with Heyne, we read 'gescife' for 'gescype,' the translation is 'hastened headlong.'

2577. *Ing's heirloom.* Or perhaps 'incge lāfe' = a mighty heirloom (as Earle takes it).

2634—2638. "Indeed, men look to the liberality of their prince for... their bloodstained and victorious lance." Tacitus, *Germania* (trans.), ch. 14.

2657. *Those were not his long-earned merits.* "Those were not old habits of service," Earle.

2680. Stopford Brooke considers the passage about Naegling a late interpolation. (See 'Naegling' in the Index of Proper Names).

2697. *The head.* His own head? *i.e.* his life (Grein, Cosijn); or the dragon's fiery head (Bugge)? I prefer the latter, and have ignored the parentheses in Wyatt's text.

2724. *After his... wound he spoke.* Most translations take 'ofer' to mean 'about' here; but I think it simply

= after (cp. lines 736 and 1781). Earle has 'in spite of his wound', and Hiram Corson (MLN. III, 193) 'he beyond' (*i.e.* of other things than) 'his wound, spake.' See also Cosijn, *Aanteekening op den Beowulf*, p. 37.

2735. *Allies in battle*—or perhaps 'weapons' cp. l. 1810.

2769. *Woven with the power of charms*. I have adopted the reading *lēoðucraeftum* because it seems very feeble to speak of the standard as 'with limb-craft belocked' just after saying that it was wrought by hand.

2784. *Impelled by the valuables*, *i.e.* hurrying in order that B. should see them. (HS.)

2829. *Result of forging*. *Lit.* 'leavings of hammers'. This expression occurs also in *Riddles VI*, 7 and the *Battle of Brunanburh* 6; and cp. *Rid. LXX*, 3.

2957. *Then was chase* (*æht*) *given to the Swedish folk*... etc. Schröder's suggestion (read *lēoda* for *lēodum* and leave *Higelāce* as in the MS.) seems a good one. The transl. would then be "Then was treasure of the Swedish nation, the banner, offered to Hygelac" ... (*i.e.* to buy him off).

2959—2960. *Fastness... serried ranks*. This follows Cosijn's interpretation.

2970. *Had turned on him* 'had collected himself' Earle.

3005. I have omitted this line (*æfter hæleða hryre hwate Scildingas*, *i.e.* after the downfall of the heroes, the brave Scyldings) in translating. Müllenhoff thought it a repetition of line 2052. In any case it is unintelligible as it stands with the context. The emendation 'Scilfingas' (see note in Wyatt's edition) still leaves the line a very awkward one. Sarrazin (*Beowulf Studien* p. 86) refers to the line as an evidence that the poet could not have been a Geat, and suggests, (ES. 23, 245) following Thorpe, that Beowulf may have become king of the Danes after Hrothgar's death.

3034. *Keeping his helpless bed*. So Earle.

3043. *The gladsome air*. So Cosijn. 'Air-joy', 'flying', Sweet.

3084. *We have received the fate appointed from on high.* I have varied a little from Wyatt's text here, and read 'hēoldon hēah-gesceap'.

3126—3131. There was not the usual partition of the spoil, because it was all to be burned on Beowulf's funeral pyre.

3150—3155. I have followed Bugge's restoration of this half-obliterated passage.

3151. *The aged woman*, Beowulf's widow? Hygd? (So Müllenhoff and Socin; but see Cosijn *Aant.* 42.)

3169—3177. Cosijn quotes a passage from Jordanes (§49) which shows that a similar practice to that described here existed among the Huns.

## NOTES ON THE FIGHT AT FINNSBURG

The original MS. of this short fragment, written on a single leaf of a codex of homilies which once existed in the Archiepiscopal Library at Lambeth, has long been lost. It is referred to in Hickes' *Thesaurus linguarum septentrionalium*. Oxford, 1705, (Vol. I, p. 192). and his transcription of it in that work is our only authority for the text. Some of the numerous obscurities in the poem are doubtless attributable to the transcriber, and they have given rise to a large crop of emendations.

The fragment is a wonderfully vigorous and dramatic piece of writing, and a translation of it is inserted in this book on account of its connection with the difficult episode of King Finn (*Beowulf*, lines 1068—1159).

The translation is based generally on the text as given in Wyatt's *Beowulf* (pp. 138, 139), and any variations from that text which have been adopted are specified in the following notes.

5. *Boar-crest*. For 'her' (Hickes), 'fēr' (Grein, Bugge, Wyatt), I think 'ferh' (= fearh) is a possibility, cp. 'ferh wearde heold' *Beo.* 305. (where, however, ferh is suspected to be wrong by Kemble, Bugge and others).

20. *So noble a life, i.e.* as that of Hengest.

22. *Forasmuch as he...* Lines 15 to 27 present much difficulty; but we may get an intelligible meaning by taking 'ac' in the sense of 'because' which is given to it by Cosijn in certain passages of *Beowulf* (e.g. at line 1509), and considering the valiant warrior of line 23 to be the same as the man hardy in battle of line 21—*i.e.* the chief of the attacking party, Finn.

28. *In the hall*, keeping to Hickes' transcript (on healle), which is supported by Professor ten Brink in Vol. II of the *Grundriss der Germanischen Philologie* (pp. 546, 549).

29. *Keel-shaped shield*, *i.e.* hollowed? or round? Reading 'celod bord', as in the *Battle of Maldon*, l. 283. Jellinek suggests 'cēled' *i.e.* chilled, cold, and quotes 'gār morgenceald' *Beowulf* 3021, 2, in support. Hickes' transcript has 'celæs borð'.

30. *Boar-helmet*. Reading 'bārhelm' (Bugge, PB. XII, 26).

34. *A crowd of foemen fell*. Reading 'hwearf lāðra hrēas'. Jellinek in PB. XV, 431.



## INDEX OF THINGS

[*Note.*—Kennings are usually omitted]

**Armour**, see War.

**Augury**, see 204 and note.

**Banners**, see War.

**Bed, bedding**,

*Bed* (bed) 140, 676, 1007; (legerbed) 1240, 1791, 3034, (hlimbed); *couch, bed* (sealma, selma) 2460.

*Bolster*, 1240; cushion, pillow 688 (hlēorbolster).

**Building**, see House. (To build is 'timbran' 207, 3159)

**Burial**, see *Disposal of the Dead*.

**Callings**, see Trades.

**Clothing**. No article of civil clothing is mentioned in Beowulf except perhaps the 'hrægl' which = cloak, mantle at 1195, 1217, (though this may very well have been armour; see Wülker in Anglia Anzeiger VIII, 168).

For Armour see War.

**Disposal of the Dead**.

*Bier* (bær) 3105.

*Bale-fire* (bæl, bæl-fȳr etc.) 1109, 1116, 2126, 2803, 2818, 3112, 3143.

**Domestic utensils**, see Vessels.

**Drinks**.

*Ale* (ealu) only in compounds, as ale-bench, 1029, 2867; ale-can, 481, 495, 2021; ale-drinker, 1945.

*Beer* (bēor), 480, 531, 2041; and in compounds 117, 482, 492, 617, 1094, 1240, 2635.

*Mead* (medo, medu), 604, 2633, (wered) 496; mead-bench (medubenc), 776, 1052, 1067: also other compounds.

*Wine* (wīn), 1162, 1233, 1467; wine-hall (wīnærn, wīnreced, wīnsele), 654, 695, 714, 771, 993.

**Fortifications**, see War.

**Funerals**, see Disposal of the Dead.

**Furniture**, see House, Bed.

**Gallows**, see Punishment.

**Helmet**, see War.

**Horse.**

*Bit, bridle* (inferred from gebæted) 1399. See illustrations, Fig. 4.

*Cheek-pieces* (ornamented, inferred from fætedhleor) 1036.

*Saddle* (sadol) 1038; in comp. 2175.

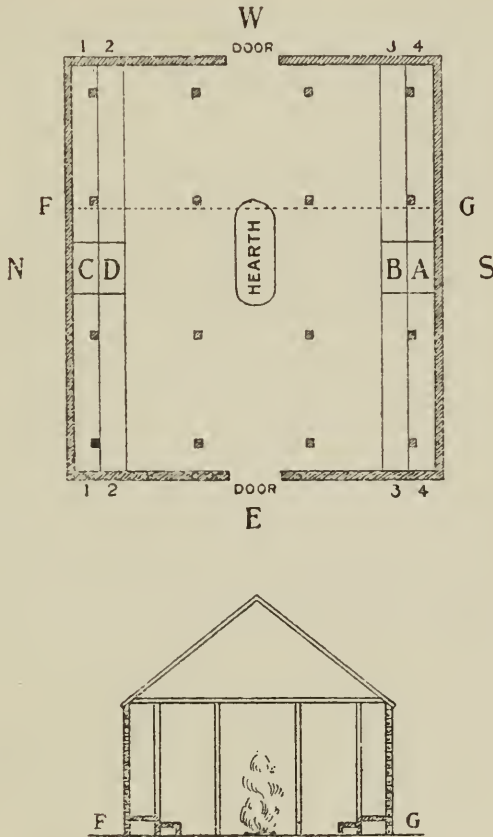
**House; building.**

The following succinct description of an ancient Scandinavian dwelling, and more particularly of a Royal Hall, is translated from a note at page 225 of Dr. L. Simons' *Beowulf vertaald in stafrijm*, Gent, 1896, with a few alterations and additions, some of which have been kindly suggested to me by the author himself. In order to make the description clearer, I have added two (quite conventional) diagrams.

The Scandinavian dwelling was rectangular. The roof was supported by four rows of pillars. The two outer rows were close to the external walls, the two others, more to the interior, being separated from the outer ones by about one-third of the breadth of the building, so that the room was divided into a nave and two side aisles. In the middle division was an open hearth. The two side aisles were covered by a long wooden planking, which was raised, usually by two steps, towards the wall and this served for seats. Of these tiers of seats the set to the right of the entrance at the east end (3, 4 in Fig. I) was the more honourable. Exactly in the middle of each tier were the two places of special honour (A, B, C, D), of which the upper ones were the most distinguished. The space was enough for several persons (1188—1191; 2011—2013). The highest place (A) was always taken by the chieftain to whom the house belonged, In the case of our poem this would be Hrothgar. Unferth who sat 'at the feet of the lord of the Scyldings' (l. 500) would be at B on the lower tier. The second highest place,—C on the opposite rank—was given to the most notable guest. Hence Beowulf was placed in this position on his visits to Hrothgar and Hygelac (1977, 8; 2013, etc.). The loose tables—probably nothing more than planks similar to those forming the seats, but movable and supported by trestles—were placed in front of the raised seats. On the



latter the Geats and Danes slept after the tables or bench-boards (486, 1239) had been stored on the floor of the middle aisle.



DIAGRAMS OF A SCANDINAVIAN ROYAL HALL.

Upper Figure: Ground Plan; Lower Figure: Vertical Section on line F. G.

Further details as to the ancient Scandinavian house are contained in Part XIII of Paul's *Grundriss der Germanischen Philologie*, pp. 228—235 (see especially what is said as to the 'Königliche Gefolgestube', at p. 232), and Holmberg's *Nordbon under Hednatiden*, Stockholm, 1871, which contains, opposite p. 129, a lithograph of an ancient dwelling-house.

*Dwelling-place* (wīc), 125, 821, 1125, 1304, 1612, 2589, 3083; (geard, only in pl. and referring to the en-

- closure containing the dwellings of chieftains), 13, 265, 1134, 1138, 2459; (hof), 312, 1236, 1507, 1836, 1974, 2313.
- Building* (reced), 310, 326, 412, 720, 770, 3088 etc. (and in comp.); (bold), 997, 1925, 2196, 2326; (foldbold), 773.
- Temple, heathen* (herg, heargtræf), 175, 3072.
- House* (hūs), 116, 146, 285, 658, 935; (ærn?) 2225; (the comp. healærn occurs at 78, and hordærn at 2280 and 2831).
- Hall* (heall), 89, 389, etc.; (sele, with many compounds) 81, 307; (sæl), 411, 713 etc.; (hrōfsele = roofed hall), 1515; (flet, also in primary signification of 'floor' 1540, 1568) 1025, 1068, 1034.
- Room, chamber, bedroom* (būr), 140, 1310, 2455, 921 (brýdbūr).
- Roof* (hrōf), 403, 836, 893, 926. etc.
- Floor* (flōr), 725; (mosaic?) 1316; (flet) 1540, 1568.
- Wall* (weall), 326, 1573, 2307, 2323 etc.; (wæg) 995, 1662.
- Door* (duru), 388, 721; *door-hinges* (heorras), 999.
- Threshold, staple?* [Miller in *Anglia* XII, 308 and Earle, *Deeds of Beowulf*, p. 139]; (stapol), 926.
- Column, pillar, support* (stapol), 2718.
- Decorations (external, of roof etc. by antlers)*, 82; (horn-gēap, see Miller in *Anglia* XII, 396), 704; (horn-reced); 781, (bānfæg); (*internal,—tapestry*), 995 (web æfter wāgum).
- Seat, bench* (benc), 327, 492, 776, 1013, 1188, 1243; (bencðel), 486, 1239: (setl), 4, 1232, 1289, 2020 etc.; (stōl see throne).
- Throne* (hēahsetl) 1087; (yppe) 1815; (gifstōl) 168, 2327.
- Table* only in compound (bēod-genēatas), 343, 1713; (see Sz. 19).

### Implements and Tools.

*File* (fēl = fēol), 1032.

*Hammer* (hamer, homer). 1258, 2829.

### Metals.

*Gold* (gold), 304, 1484 etc. (also in many compounds), *gold plate, beaten gold* (fætgold) 1921. [There is no mention of silver in the poem, see note to line 1038].

*Iron* (īren) with special sf. of 'sword' 802, 2778 etc.; (stýle), 985.

*Wire* (wīr) as decoration, 1031, 2413.

**Money**—or rather wealth, not in actual coinage—(sceattas) 1686; (bēag) 80, 351, 522, 2284 etc. Cp. Widsith 90—92:—

“Se mē bēag forgeaf. . .  
on ðæm siexhund wæs smætes goldes  
gescyred sceatta scillingrīme.”

(He . . . gave me a ring on which were scored 600 sceats of beaten gold, reckoned by scillings.) “The portions of a bēag, outlined on the gold, would be called scillings; when these were adjusted to a fixed scale upon the weight of the solidus, the scilling would become (1) a definite division of a ring, (2) a division equal in weight to a solidus, and this is its meaning here.” SB i, 3 (referring to the above passage in Widsith). The words for *treasure* (‘hord’), 887, 912, 2782 etc., (and ‘sinc’), 81, 1485, 2746 etc., are constantly used, and show that the wealth of the times consisted in valuable objects of utility (as drinking-vessels) or adornment (collars, bracelets, armlets). See especially 1089—1094.

### Musical Instruments.

*Horn* (horn), 1423, 2943; war-horn (gūðhorn), 1432.

*Trumpet* (bȳme) 2943.

*Harp* (hearpe), 89, 2107, 2262, 3023; (gomenwudu), 1065, 2108; (glēobēam), 2263.

### Ornaments.

*Adornments generally, jewels, gems* (frætwa, frætwe), 337, 896, 962, 1208, 2055, 2795, 2920, 3134, etc.; (gim), 2072; (searogim), 1157, 2749 (artistic jewel); (wræt), 1531, 2413, 2771, 3060; *plated or overlaid objects, gold-plate* (fæt), 716, 2256.

*Ring* (bēag, often used as a substitute for money, see Money), 35, 80, 522, etc.

*Collar, torque, carcanet* (bēag), 1211, 1216, 2041; (heals-bēag), 1195, 2172; (mene—of the Brisings’ necklace only), 1199; (hring), 2809 (golden). See Fig. 8.

*Diadem* (bēag), 1163; (in comp.), 624.

*Bracelet, armlet* (earmbēag), 2763; (earmhrēad), 1194. See Fig. 7.

*Bracteates* (sigl = sun-shaped ornament), 1157, 1200, 3163,

**Professions**, see Trades.

### Punishment.

*Gallows* (galga), 2446; (galgtrēow), 2940.

**Roads.**

*Street* (strǣt), 320, (paved with stones, Earle, p. 119) 916, 1634.

*Path* (stīg), 320, 1409, 2213; in comp. (medostīg), 924; (foldweg = country track?), 866.

**Shipping.**

*Ship, bark, boat* (scip), 35, 302; (broad-bosomed), 896, 1154, 1895, 1917; (sundwudu), 1906, (or simply *wudu*), 216; (w. bundenne), 298; (w. wunden-hals), 1919; (naca), 214, 295, (newly-tarred) 1896; (sægēap), 1903; high ship (brenting), 2807; (bāt), 211; (sæbāt), 633, 895; in comp. (bātweard), 1900; (fær), 33; (f̄dlida), 198; (flota), 210, 218, 294, 301; (wēgflota), 1907; (ceol. lit. 'keel'), 38, 238, 1806, 1912. See Frontispiece for illustration. Details of an actual example, found at Nydam, are given in Engelhardt's *Denmark in the Early Iron Age*, London, 1866.

*Stern, prow* (stefn), 212, and in comp. as = to ship (hringedstefna = ring-prowed ship), 34, 1131; (bunden-stefna), 1910; (wunden-stefna), 220.

*Gangway?* (bolca), 231.

*Sail* (segl) 1906; in comp. (seglrād), 1429; (merehrægl), 1905.

*Anchor* (ancor, oncer), 303, 1883; anchor-ropes (oncerbend). 1918.

**Spears, standards, swords, see War.**

**Tapestry, see House (Decorations).**

**Trades, callings, professions.**

*Smith*, for armour or weapons (smið), 406 (armour), 1452 (weapons); besmiðian is 'to do smith's work'.

*Watchman*, of a ship in harbour (bātweard), 1900; of the harbour (h̄yðweard), 1914; of the country, frontier (landweard) (1890).

*Chamberlain, steward* (seleðegn), 1794.

*Bard, minstrel*, (scop), 90, 495, 1096.

*Orator* (ðyle), 1165, 1456.

**Vehicles.**

*Waggon, wain*, (wæn), 3134.

**Vessels.**

*Cup, flagon, tankard, bowl, vessel* (būne), 2775, 3047; (ful), 615, 628, 1025, 1169, 1192, 1208; (medoful), 624, 1015; (seleful), 619; (fæt), 2761; (dryncfæt), 2306, 2254; (sincfæt), 2231, 2300; (simply = precious object at 622, 1200), (maððum fæt), 2405; (wundor fæt), 1162;

(orc), 2760, 3047; (wāge), 2253, 2282; (līðwāge), 1982; (ealuwāge), 480, 494 (hroden), 2021.

*Dish* (disc), 2775, 3048.

## War.

*Earthwork, entrenchment* (eorðweall), 2957, 3090; (weall), 786, 2307, 2527; (haga), 2892, 2860.

*Armour generally* (heaðowæd), 39; (heaðoreaf), 401; (hildesceorp), 2155; (gūðgeatwa), 395, 2636; and many similar expressions.

*Coat of mail, corslet* (byrne), 40, 238, 405, 2153; (gray), 3140; (bright = of metallic lustre?) described as made of (iron) rings, (īrenbyrne), 2986; (īsernbyrne), 671; (hringīren), 322; (*or simply* hring, 1202 etc.); (hringed byrne), 1245, 2615, (byrnan hring), 2260; (beadohrægl), 551 ('gold-adorned'); (beaduscūd), 453; (fyrdhrægl), 1527; (fyrdhom), 1504; (syrce), 226, 334, 1111 and often in comp. as (leoðosyrce), 1505; (licsyrce), 550 ('hard and hand-locked'); (herenet), 1554.

The corslet of ring-mail, says Sophus Müller (*Nordische Altertumskunde* II, 128), was composed of small, fine iron rings, which were so arranged that every ring was interlocked with four others (see Illustrations Fig. 6). A complete corslet of this kind found at Vimoor (Funen) was made up of about 20,000 rings, and it is estimated that it must have taken a man something like a year to make it. From this the high value and comparative rarity of such corslets can easily be understood.

*Helmet* (helm), 240, 341, 403, 1448, (white); 1245, 2153, (bright in battle); 2615, (brown-hued); 2723, 2811, (gold-adorned); 2987 and frequently; (surmounted by boar-images), 1286, 1448—1453, and see especially 303—305, and 1328, and Fig. 3. (grīma, only in comp.), 2257, (beadogrīma); 396, 2049, 2605 (heregrīma).

*Cheek pieces*, above which were the boar-figures (hleorberge), 309.

*Rim or roll on the outside of the helmet* (wala), 1301; (wīrum bewunden), see 'wala' in glossary to Wyatt's *Beowulf*.

*Shield* (rand), 231; (bright), 326; (very hard), 656, 2609 etc. and in comp.; (sīdrand), 1289; (geolorand), 438; (hilderand), 1242; (scyld), 325, (broad); 333, (overlaid); 2850 etc. and comp.; (bord), 2259, 2525, 2674 and in comp. as (wīgbord), 2339, (ornamented); (bordwudu), 1243, (bright); (bordrand),

2559; (lind, properly linden wood, cp. ash for spear), 2341. 2365, 2610 (yellow); and comp.; (byrduscrūd), 2660. See Illustrations (Fig. 2), showing bronze or iron bands at the joints of the wood, and bronze rim; also Frontispiece, showing shields hung over the ship's side. Exceptionally, Beowulf's shield in his fight with the dragon was entirely of iron (so as to be fireproof) 2337—2339.

*Sword* (sweord), 436, 566 and frequently; 518 (naked), ornamented, chased, 672, 1023; (māððum sweord), 1286 (hammer-forged), 1489 (wæg-sweord 'with wavy pattern'), 1696 (this sword was marked on the guard, which was of pure gold, with the first owner's name, in runic characters; it had also a hilt of twisted pattern and snaky ornamentation. It is called the 'choicest of weapons'. See Illustrations of sword-hilt with runic characters on it. Fig. 1. 1900 (bunden golde), see Heyne-Socin, s.v. ('binden'); hard, hard-edged, hilted, 1289, 2638, 2987; 2492 (bright), 3048 (rusty), 586 (fah).

(bil) (generally—unlike sweord—without epithet), 40, 583, 1144, 2777 and frequently; also in comp. (gūð-bil), 803, 2585; (hildebil), 557, 1521; (wīg-bil), 1607.

(mēce), 565, 1812, 2939, 2978 (broad), etc. also in comp.

(mæl), 1616 (brōden = chased, damascened, as in Fig. 5), 1667, 1939 (scēadenmæl); ring-adorned (hringmæl), 1521, 1564; damascened and bejewelled (wundenmæl, wrættum gebunden), 1531; of greyish hue (grægmæl) 2682.

(ord. properly = sword-point), 556, 1549.

(īren), 1809.

(brond), 1454.

(secg), 684.

*Sword-hilt* (hilt), 1574, 1614, 1687; (synecdoche, for sword), 1668, 1677 (gylden), and in comp. (fetelhilt), 1563; (wreoðenhilt), 1698; (hæft) only in hæftmēce, 1457. See Fig. 1.

*Sword-guard* (scenne), 1694.

*Dagger, dirk* (worn at the hip), cp. 2704 and Fig. 3. (seax), 1545 (broad, brown-edged); comp. (wæl-seax), 2703 (sharp, worn on the corslet).

*Spear, javelin* (gār), 328, 1075, 1846, 2440, 3021 and in comp. (Gār Dene, etc.) (æsc properly = the spear-shaft, which was of ash-wood), 1772; boar-spear (eoforsprēot), 1437; spear-shaft (æscholt) 330 (tipped with iron).

*Dart* (daroð), 2848.

*Bow* (boga, only in comps) (flānboga), 1433, 1745;  
(hornboga), 2437.

*Arrow* (flān—see also flānboga under *Bow*), 2438, 3119;  
(stræ̅l) 1746, 3117.

*Standard, banner* (segn), 47, 1021 (gilded), 1204, 2767  
(gilt all over), 2776, 2958; (hēafod segn), 2152; (cumbol), 2505; (hilte cumbor), banner with staff, 1022.

### **Writing.**

Runic characters (rūnstafas), 1696, and see Fig. 1.

To write (writan), 1688.

## CLASSICAL LOAN WORDS

- Ancre, 303, 1883, 1918+.  
Candel, 1572, 1965.  
Ceaster, 768+.  
Cumbol? cumbor? (See MLN. III, 11), +1022, 2505.  
Dēofol, 756, 1680, 2088.  
Disc, 2775, 3048.  
Draca, 892, 2088, 2211, +2273, 2290, +2333, 2402, 2549,  
+2689, +2712, +2825, 3040, 3131.  
Giganta, 113, 1562, 1690.  
Mīl, 1362+.  
Nōn, 1600.  
Segn, 47, 1021, 1204, +2152, 2767, 2776, 2958.  
Stræt, +239, 320, +514, 916, 1634.  
Weall, 229, 326, 572, 891, +1224, 1573, +1924, 2307, 2323,  
2526, 2716, 2759, +2956, +2980, 3060, +3090, 3103, +3118,  
3132+.  
Wīn, 654+, 714+, 993+, 1163, 1233, 1468.

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Stānfāg (320) indicates paving after the Roman fashion.  
Heyne—*Heorot*, p. 15; cp. *Andreas*, 1234.



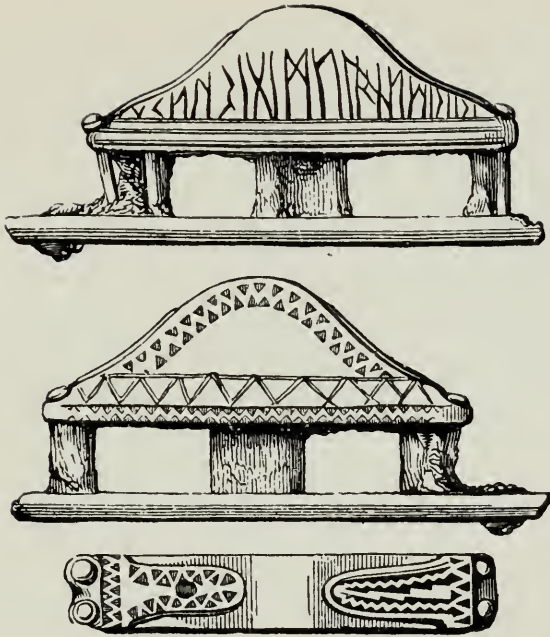


Fig. 1. PART OF A SWORD HILT (the pommel), showing runic inscription on the side. The two lower cuts show the other side and the top of the pommel, with ornamentation.



Fig. 2. WOODEN SHIELD, with boss of bronze or iron in centre, and bronze mountings round edge and at junction of wood.

*Figs. 1—8 to follow p. 182.*





Fig. 3. WARRIORS (Island of Öland), WITH BOAR IMAGES on helmet, spear in right hand, and short sword in left hand.



Fig. 4. BIT AND BRIDLE.

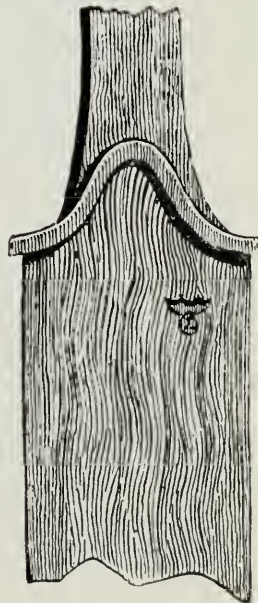


Fig. 5. DAMASCENED SWORD-BLADE.



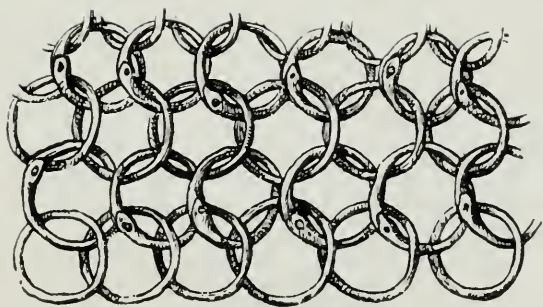


Fig. 6. CORSET OF RING-MAIL.  
The lower cut shows the arrangement of the rings.



PARALLEL EXPRESSIONS IN WIDSITH  
AND BEOWULF

WIDSITH		BEOWULF	
line		line	
1 <i>b</i>	wordhord onlēac	259 <i>b</i>	wordhord onlēac
2 <i>b</i>	ofer eorðan	248 <i>a</i>	ofer eorðan
3 <i>b</i>	on flette geðāh	1024 <i>b</i>	... geðāh
6 <i>b</i>	forman sīðe	1025 <i>a</i>	ful on flette
7 <i>b</i>	hām gesōhte	716 <i>b</i>	forma sīð
9 <i>b</i>	worn sprecan	717 <i>b</i>	hām gesōhte
11 <i>a</i>	ðēodna gehwylc	530 <i>b</i> . . . 531 <i>b</i>	worn . . . spræce
11 <i>b</i>	ðēawum lifgan	3094 <i>b</i>	worn . . . gespræc
13 <i>a</i> . . . <i>b</i>	sēðe . . . wile	1705 <i>a</i>	ðēoda gehwylce
16 <i>a</i>	monna cynnes	2144 <i>b</i>	ðēawum lyfde
34 <i>ab</i>	Hringweald wæs hāten	1003 <i>b</i>	sēðe wille
	Herefarena cyning	702 <i>b</i>	manna cynnes
51 <i>a</i>	geond ginne grund	2603 <i>ab</i>	Wiglāf wæs hāten
54 <i>a</i> . . . <i>b</i>	ic mæg . . . secgan spell	1551 <i>a</i>	Weoxstānes sunu
66 <i>a</i>	forgēaf . . .	3028 <i>a</i> . . . <i>b</i>	under gynne grund
67 <i>a</i>	songes tō lēane	3029 <i>a</i>	se secg . . . secgende
67 <i>b</i>	næs ðæt sǣne cyning	1020 <i>a</i>	wæs
71 <i>b</i>	mīne gefræge	1021 <i>a</i>	lāðra spella
77 <i>ab</i>	... wīnburga geweald āhte	11 <i>b</i>	forgēaf . . .
101 <i>a</i>	under swegle	776 <i>b</i>	sigores tō lēane
102 <i>a</i>	goldhroden cwēn	1727 <i>b</i>	ðæt wæs gōd cyning
114 <i>a</i>	frōdne and gōdne	1078 <i>a</i>	mīne gefræge
119 <i>b</i>	wīg ne ālæg	640 <i>b</i>	hē āh ealra geweald
120 <i>b</i>	heardum sweordum	641 <i>a</i>	under swegle
129 <i>b</i>	wundnan golde	279 <i>a</i>	... goldhroden
130 <i>a</i>	werum and wīfum	1041 <i>b</i>	... folccwēn
138 <i>a</i>	sūd oððe norð	1042 <i>a</i>	... frōd ond gōd
141 <i>a</i>	eorlscipe æfnan	2987 <i>a</i>	nǣfre on ōre læg
143 <i>a</i>	under heofonum	1042 <i>a</i>	wīdcūðes wīg
		2987 <i>a</i>	heard swyrd
		1382 <i>a</i>	wundnum golde
		993 <i>a</i>	wera ond wīfa
		858 <i>a</i>	sūð ne norð
		2622 <i>a</i>	eorlscipe æfnan
		505 <i>a</i>	under heofenum

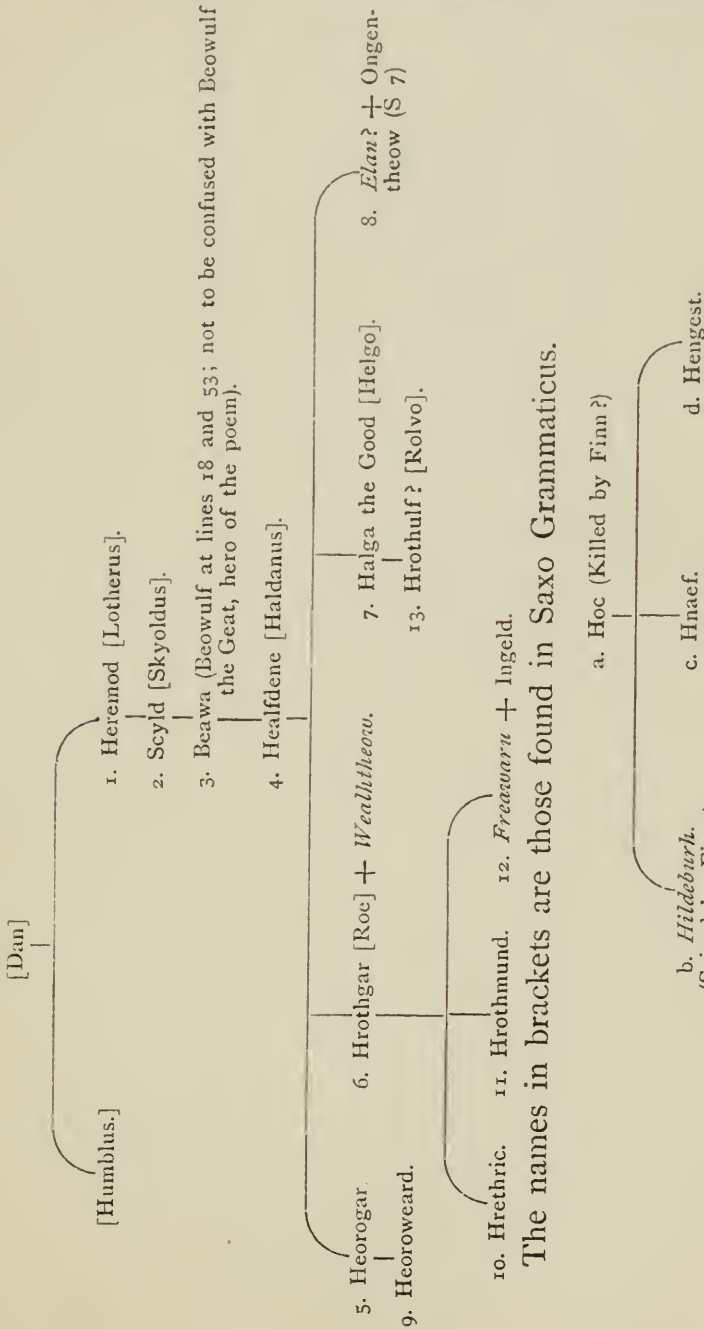




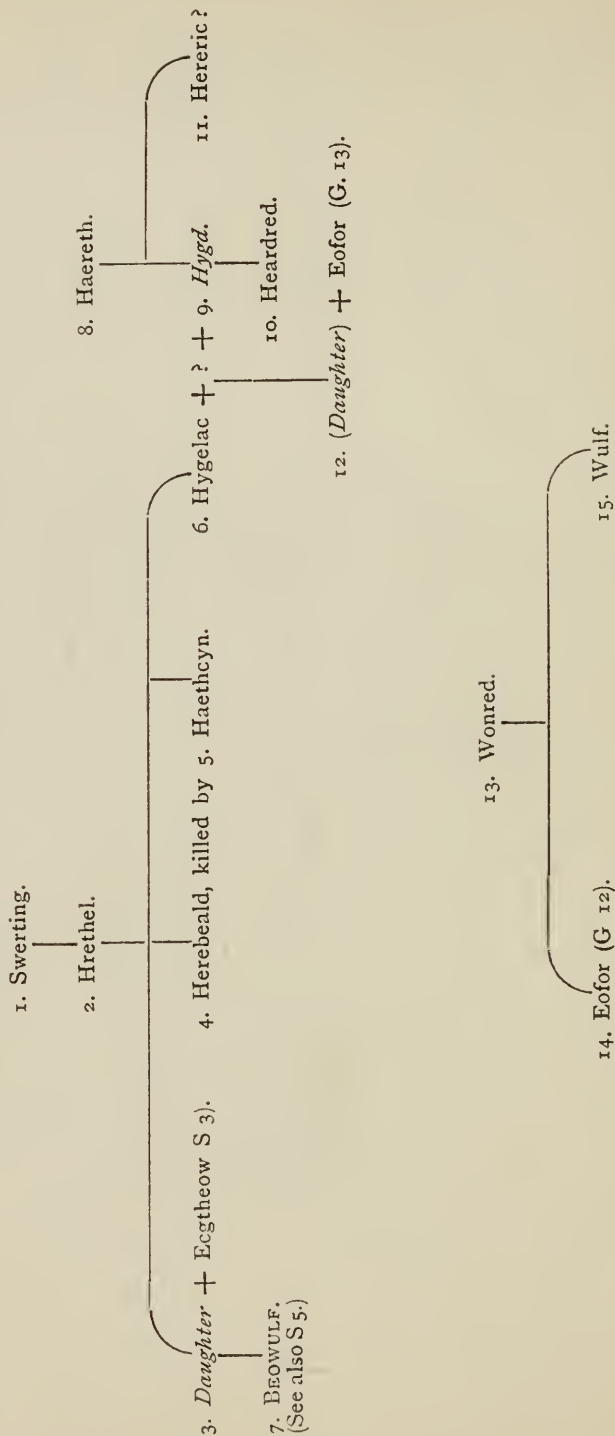
## GENEALOGICAL TABLES

*Note.*—Females are printed in *Italic type*.

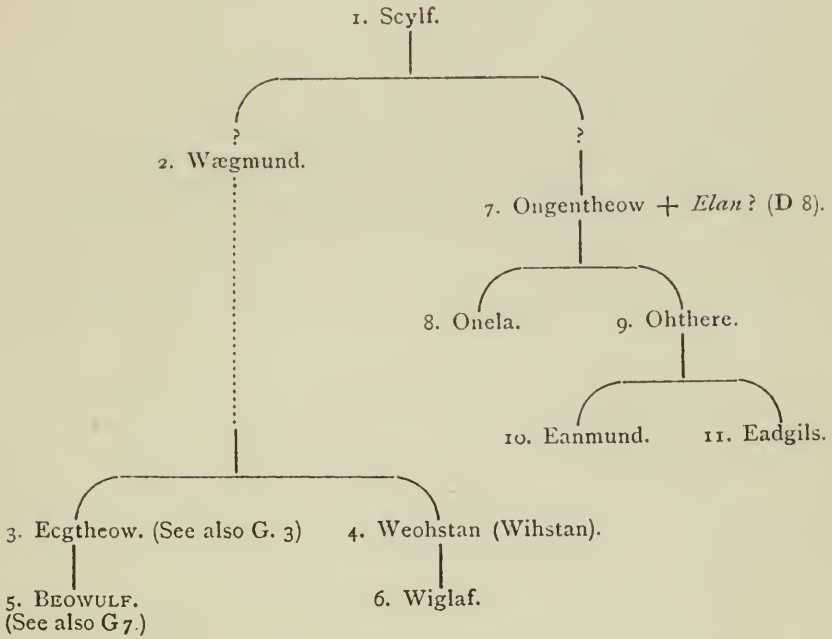
### D. *Danes* [Scyldings, Ingwine, Hrethmen].



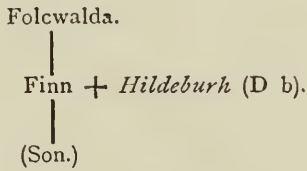
Other Danes mentioned in the poem are Aeschere, Ecglaef, Ecgwela, Guthlaef, Heremod, Oslaf, Unferth and Yrmenlaf.

G. *Geats* (Weders, Hrethlings).

S. *Swedes* (Scylfings).



F. *Frisians*.



Hunlafing is perhaps another Frisian (of Finn's following) who is mentioned in the poem.

A. *Angles.*

Garmund.  
 |  
 Offa (1) + *Thrytho.*  
 |  
 Eomaer.

In the Mercian genealogies of the AS. Chronicle (Parker MS. A.D. 755) the above names are found in the following order:—Woden, Wihthlaeg, **Waermund** (= Garmund), **Offa** (1), Angeltheow, **Eomaer**, Icel, Cnebba, Cynewald, Creoda, Pybba, Eawa, Osmod, Eanwulf, Thingferth, Offa, (2).

Offa (1) and Eomaer are both referred to in the poem as kinsmen of Hemming.

## INDEX OF PROPER NAMES

NOTE.—*The references G 4, D 8, etc. are to the Genealogical Tables at the beginning of this Index.*

*Abel.* Reference is made to his murder by Cain. 108.

*Aelfhere.* A Swede (Scylfing) and relation of Wiglaf. 2604.

*Aeschere.* A Dane of Hrothgar's court and a particular favourite of his. Killed by Grendel's mother. 1294, 1323, 2122.

*Beanstan.* Father of Breca the Bronding, 524.

*Beowulf the Dane* (D 3), an ancestor of Hrothgar, is the Beaw of the genealogies inserted at A.D. 855 in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (Parker MS.). Sievers gives good reasons, founded on passages in Saxo (Elton's transl., pp. 45, 46 and 222) for believing this Beowulf to be the original hero of the adventure with the dragon. (Sievers, *Saxo*, 180—188). 18, 53, 57.

*Beowulf the Geat* (G 7, S 5), belonged to the Geatic royal family, and also, by his father's side, to the Swedish stock of the Waegmundings.

Setting aside the episodes, he is the only brave man in the poem, with the exception of Wiglaf. Probably it is not intended that we should stamp the rest as cowards, nor is it a device for throwing the hero into strong relief, but we are to know that the brave men of that time all quailed before the supernatural, and that monsters were—so to speak—a speciality of Beowulf (418—426, 574—5, 2532—5). This gives the poem quite a different character to the Nibelungenlied, where everybody is equally brave, and the Chanson de Roland, where the hero is the most distinguished of a company of brave men.

The character of Beowulf is worthy of careful study. It is drawn in great detail and upon the whole with admirable consistency. The poet is a faithful chronicler, even of his hero's faults, and his portrayal of Beowulf becomes all the more valuable on that account. We feel

that we may safely take the latter as a truthful type of the best of the noble warriors of his day. We have in two places—at the end of the first and again at the end of the second part of the poem (2177—2189 and 3181—3)—the author's own estimate of the character of Beowulf. In the first place he is described as valiant, discreet and large of heart, in the second as mild and gentle, kindly to his men and eager after fame.

As we go through the poem we shall find these traits appearing in his words and actions.

First we notice the loftiness of his sentiments—glory is what a man should aim at, (1387—9, 2514); death or victory! (632—8, 1490—1, 2535—7). The brave man must not be a brute, he must be 'an officer and a gentleman'—even when he fights with monsters! (428—440, 679—687, 2518—2524). There is the ring of chivalry about such lines as 2345—7, and 2532—7. Nay, we find something more—such kindly care about his followers as marks the best of British officers to-day. (1477—1481). He cannot leave his rival, Breca, in the lurch (543). The courtesy which surprises and charms us in the poem is very marked in Beowulf (344—347, 1319—1320, 1809—1812), who could, as we see from the last-quoted extract and from 1455—1491, forget a transient quarrel like a well-bred man. There is nothing more violent than Beowulf's outburst of ill-temper at the taunts of Unferth; but Unferth makes amends, and is received again as a friend without reserve.

Beowulf's nobility of soul comes out in many places, but most of all, I think, in his refusal of the proffered kingdom of the Geats, followed by faithful, loyal and respectful help of the young king until he came of age (2373—2378). He is not unambitious, but seems indifferent to an honour which he does not have to fight for. He is a mercenary and an adventurer by profession—we must not forget it; and he looks for his reward—Hrothgar and others do not forget that (660, 1380—2, 2134). He is treated like a gentleman, rejoices in his presents and is ready to do service again on the same terms (1820—1825, 1880—1885, 2101—2). But though he even talks of fighting for gold (2535), it is for others rather than himself (2794—2801). Gold is not topmost in his thoughts, but glory (1612—1615). The gifts he has received he gives away with generous hand (1900—1903, 2148—2154). The spirit of adventure which has marked the Englishman in all ages is very strong in him (199—201, 457, 8).

He is prudent and discreet (1706, 1841—5), except in the Unferth-episode already referred to, in which he clearly

lost his temper and from which we see that he was foolhardy in his youth (508—512). He gives evidence of political acumen at lines 2029—2031 and 2067—2069. According to the standard of the times he is unassuming, self-restrained and modest (1705, 2373)—what boastfulness he has belongs to the age (418—426, 675—685, 958, 2501, 2510), and seems to have been almost obligatory in his profession (2519—2521, 2527, 8). There is a fine passage at 2733—2743 where in his dying hour, he boasts, with inborn paganism, of general righteousness of life. Pious he is, without a doubt, but his piety, as we see from this and other passages, is half-heathen and half-christian, and strongly tinged with gloomy fatalism (442—455, 685—7, 964, 1658). Sadness is the prevailing note in Anglo-Saxon poetry; but in Beowulf's case we have the added pathos of his loneliness (2729—2732).

We may dismiss the darker side of Beowulf's character with a very few words. In some respects it is evident that his ethical standard was low; for he takes great credit to himself for not having sworn *many* false oaths, or murdered his relations (2738—2740). At the same time it must be remembered that it was the sacred duty of every man to avenge the slaughter of his nearest kinsfolk, and his dearest friends (1385), and that in taking vengeance the custom of the times permitted every sort of treachery (2029—2031). Having spoken of this, of his generic tendency to brag, his recklessness in youth, and his violence under provocation, there is nothing more to say.

*Breca*, competes with Beowulf in a swimming contest. He is a chief of the Brondings, and son of Beanstan. Bugge connects the episode with the Icelandic Saga of Egil (506—589).

*Brisings'* necklace, (*O. Norse*, 'Brisinga mēn'). The Brosings' or Brisings' necklace, mentioned in the *Edda* (Hamarsheimt) as having been worn by the goddess Freyja. The word Brosing is connected with Breisgau (the southern part of the Black Forest) which is indeed probably the original home of the legend. 1199.

*Brondings* (*Widsith* 26) the tribe of which Breca was chief. Beanstan his father is also mentioned. Perhaps they inhabited Mecklenburg or Pomerania (A. 61). 521.

*Cain* is mentioned at lines 107 and 1261. Grendel is said to be descended from him.

*Daeghrefn*, a warrior of the Hugs, whom Beowulf slew. 1501.

*Danes.* The scene of the first part of the poem is the Danish island of Zealand, and the Danes are spoken of as also possessing Scedenig or the Scedelands (= the southernmost part of Sweden). They are called Scyldings (on account of their descent from Scyld—see Genealogical Table D) and Ingwine (= Ingaevones or friends of Ing). With reference to their prowess they are spoken of as Spear-Danes, Illustrious Danes etc., and in regard to their geographical distribution as East Danes, West Danes, North Danes, South Danes. In *Widsith* they are called Sea-Danes at line 29, Danes at line 35 and South Danes at line 58.

*Eadgils* (S. 11) a Swede, son of Ohthere and grandson of Ongentheow. (= *O. N.* Adils or Athils, mentioned in the *Heimskringla* as one of the Yngling kings of Sweden). In the translation I have adopted the view set out at p. 143 of Wyatt's *Beowulf*, from which I take the following "Eanmund and Eadgils are banished from Sweden "for rebellion (2379 ff) and take refuge at the court of "the Geat king, Heardred. The fact of their finding an "asylum with his hereditary foes seems to have so en- "raged the Swedish king Onela, their uncle, that he in- "vades Geatland (2202 ff) and succeeds in slaying Heard- "red (2384 ff), but allows Beowulf to succeed to the Geat "throne unmolested (2389—90). Heardred is the second "Geat king who had fallen into the hands of the Swedes, "and Beowulf at a later time (2392) balances the feud by "supporting Eadgils in his subsequent invasion of Sweden, "in which the latter slew the king, his uncle Onela."

*Eanmund* (S 10). A Swede, and son of Ohthere, killed by Weohstan. 2611.

*Earnanæs* (Sea-Eagles' Ness), near which Beowulf fought the dragon. See map for possible position. 3031.

*Ecglaf.* A Dane, Unferth's father. 490.

*Ecgtheow* (S 3 and G 3), a Swede (Waegmunding) who married into the Geats' royal family and became father of Beowulf. He gained a high reputation by slaying Heatholaf, a Wylfing, with his own hand. Afterwards he attached himself to the court of Hrothgar, who healed the feud between the Wylfings and himself. 263, 373, 459, etc.

*Ecgvæla*, a Dane. Supposed by Grein to be the founder of an earlier dynasty of Danish kings than those descended from Scyld. 1710.

*Elan?* a Dane (D. 8), daughter of Healfdene, and per-



haps wife of Ongentheow, king of the Swedes, 62 (reading doubtful, see Kluge in ES XXII, 144, who suggests that the line should read 'hyrde ic ðæt Sigeneow was Sæwelan cwēn' and that there is a reference to Signy, the wife of Sævil, of the Old Norse Hrolfs Kraka Saga).

*Eofor*, a Geat (G 14), son-in-law of Hygelac, who bestowed his daughter upon him after he had killed Ongentheow, the Swedish king. 2486, 2964, 2993, 2997.

*Eomaer*, an Angle; son of Offa and Thrytho. 1960.

*Eormenric* (= Hermanric), king of the Ostrogoths, who died A.D. 375. He is mentioned in *Beowulf* in connection with the Brisings' necklace (A 75-78). Referred to at ll. 8, 18, 88 and III of *Widsith*, and at line 21 of *Deor's Lament*. 1201.

*Eotens* (Euthiones, Saxones Eucii), a tribe of whom the king of the North Frisians (Finn) was over-lord. They have been identified with the Jutes. (A 21, SB. i, 88, 89). 1072, 1088, 1141, 1145.

*Finn*, king of the North Frisians and son of Folcwalda. He carried off a Danish princess, Hildeburh, and the feuds in which this involved him form the subject of an episode inserted at lines 1068-1159 of our poem.

*Finna land*, the land of the Finns. Sarrazin (*Beowulf Studien* p. 32) places it near the coast of Sweden, in the district of Bohuslän. There *Beowulf* landed after his five-days' swimming match with Breca. 580.

*Fitela*, the Sinfiötl of the *Völsunga Saga*, son of Sigemund the Volsing or Waelsing, by his sister Signy. Hence *Fitela* is referred to at line 881 as Sigemund's nephew. (A 67-69, SB. i. 87, 88). 875-889.

*Folcwalda*, the father of Finn, king of the North Frisians. 1089.

*Franks*. Hygelac, king of the Geats, made a raid on Friesland in or about A.D. 512, and was defeated and killed by a combination of the Franks and (West-) Frisians. This is the sole reference in the poem to a historical occurrence contemporary with the events which it relates. (A 109). 1210, 2912.

*Freawaru*, a Danish princess (D 12) daughter of Hrothgar, married to Ingeld in order to assure peace between the Danes and Heathobards; see the episode of *Freawaru* at lines 2026-2069. (SB. i, 95).

*Friesland*, the country of the West Frisians. 2357.

*Frisians* = (1) the North Frisians, over whom Finn reigned, (he also reigned over the Eotens or Jutes, and it is uncertain whether these were a separate people or identical with the North Frisians. A. 21). 1070, 1093, 1104. (2) the West Frisians, who joined with the Franks in opposing Hygelac's raid. 1207, 2912.

*Froda*, King of the Heathobards and father of Ingeld. 2025.

*Garmund*, an Angle. See Angles in the Genealogical Tables. 1962.

*Geats*, (Genealogical Table G). The people to whom Beowulf, the hero of the poem, belonged. Their country was in South Sweden, between the Danes, who occupied the extreme south, and the Swedes, whose territory was probably bounded by lake Wener. Their chief town was perhaps Kongelf or Kungelf. [Bugge's theory that they were the same people as the Jutes and inhabited Jutland, is not generally accepted. That which identifies them with the Goths has much more to recommend it. See Arnold, pp. 50—56.] They are also called Weders and Hrethlings. 195 *et passim*.

*Gepidae*. AS 'Gifðas' is translated Gepidae at line 2494. The same people are mentioned in *Widsith* (l. 61), in connection with the Wends, who inhabited East Prussia. But in historic times the Gepidae inhabited Dacia, so that Ettmüller's identification of them with the Gifðas is somewhat doubtful (A 61—63).

*Grendel* (?= grinder, destroyer—from AS 'grindan') the monster who haunted Heorot. His contest with Beowulf and death form the subject of the first part of the poem. He is one of the accursed brood which was supposed to be descended from Cain, 102, etc. His parent (or mother—see note to lines 1392, 1394), attempts to avenge his death, makes a raid into the Hall and carries off Aeschere (1294), but is pursued to her lake-dwelling by Beowulf and killed (1566).

*Guthlaf*, a Dane who took part in the fighting against King Finn. 1148.

*Haereth* (G 8), father of Hygd and father-in-law of Hygelac. 1929, 1981.

*Haethcyn* (G 5), a Geat, second son of Hrethel, king of the Geats. He treacherously killed his brother Herebeald, and afterwards succeeded to the throne. He fell in battle against Ongentheow, the Swedish king. 2434, 2474, 2482, 2925 ff.

*Half-Danes.* Bugge (PB. XII, 29) says the Hocings, of the stock of Hnaef, were called Half-Danes because they were not Danes but connected or allied with the Danes. 1069.

*Halga the Good* (D 7), a Dane, younger brother of Hrothgar, and father of Hrothulf (Helgo or Helgi, in Saxo Grammaticus is father of Rolvo, or Rolf Krake, = Hrothulf). 61.

*Hama* (*Widsith*, 124, 130), who carried off the Brisings' necklace. He appears in German legends of later date than the *Nibelungenlied*, under the name of Heime. 1198.

*Healfdene* (D 4), father and predecessor of Hrothgar as king of the Danes. He is the Haldanus of Saxo Grammaticus. 57, 189 etc.

*Heardred* (G 10), a Geat, son of Hygelac and Hygd. He becomes king of the Geats while a minor after Hygelac's death in the war with the Frisians and Franks, and Beowulf acts as his guardian and counsellor. He was killed by Onela the Swede. 2202, 2375, 2388.

*Heathobards.* "The Heathobards had a small kingdom "in the island of Zealand, of which many think that "Lethra was the chief seat." They were not connected with the Lombards, as has been supposed. (A 27, 40, 57). They are mentioned in *Widsith* as having been conquered, with their leader Ingeld, by the Danes at Heorot; see note to line 2067. The tribe are only mentioned in Beowulf in connection with their chief Ingeld and his father Froda, who appear in the episode of Freawaru. 2032, 2037, 2067.

*Heatholaf*, a Wylfing. 460. See under Ecgtheow.

*Heathoraemas* or *Heathoreamas* (Müllenhoff), the people of Raumarike, a district in the south of Norway. On their coast Breca landed after his swimming contest with Beowulf. 519.

*Hel*, perhaps used in its older sense of the Scandinavian goddess of the under-world, at line 852 (see note). But Socin and others consider that it everywhere denotes the Christian hell.

*Helmings.* Hrothgar's queen, Wealhtheow, is described as a lady of the Helmings, possibly a tribe which settled in East Anglia (Sarrazin, in ES XXIII, pp. 228, 229; A 43). 620.

*Hemming.* Offa and Eomaer (Angles) are both referred to as kinsmen of Hemming. 1944, 1961.

*Hengest*, a Dane (D d) whose name appears in the episode of Finn, lines 1068—1159.

*Heorogar*, a Dane (D 5), Hrothgar's elder brother. For some reason he did not leave his armour to his son Heorowearð, but it passed into the possession of Hrothgar, who presented it to Beowulf. He in turn gave it to Hygelac. 61, 468, 2158.

*Heorot*. (*Widsith* 49). The splendid hall which Hrothgar built; identified with Leire, the most ancient seat of the Danish kings, in Zealand, by Müllenhoff, and placed near Leire by Sarrazin, see map. It was the scene of Beowulf's encounter with Grendel, who had ravaged it for twelve years. Grendel's arm is placed on the roof of the hall after it was wrenched off by Beowulf. Its destruction by fire is foreshadowed at ll. 82, 781. Monographs on the subject of Heorot are *Über die Halle Heorot*, by Moritz Heyne, Paderborn, 1864, and *Heorot-Hall* in the Ags. poem of Beowulf, by C. Klöpffer, Rostock, 1890. Sarrazin (in *Anglia* XIX, 368), thinks it was a 'Thing-haus' which, according to the old northern custom, served also as a temple and guild-house, and thus as the tribal sanctuary of the Danes. He connects it with the worship of Balder. 78, 166, 403, 475, 766, 2097.

*Heorowearð*, a Dane (D 9). See under Heorogar. 2161.

*Herebeald*, a Geat (G 4), son of king Hrethel. See Haethcyn. 2434, 2463.

*Heregar*, (467). See Heorogar.

*Heremod*, a Danish king (D 1), identified by Sievers (*Beowulf und Saxo*, pp. 175—179) with the Lotherus of Saxo. Putting together what is said of him in Saxo and Beowulf (901—915 and 1709—1722), Sievers reconstructs his story somewhat thus:—Dan, King of the Danes, had two sons, a weakling (Humblus in Saxo) and a youth of heroic type (Heremod). After Dan's death Humblus is elevated to the throne and Heremod goes into banishment (? the *sīð* of line 908). But Humblus cannot withstand some attack—either by revolutionaries within or by foes from outside the kingdom, and many look to Heremod for help. Supported by a trusty band, he overcomes Humblus and wins the kingdom for himself. But now his evil qualities—his greediness and cruelty—break out; he becomes the scourge of his people, who at last drive him out (and kill him?) 901, 1709.

*Hereric*, a Geat (G 11?) 2206.

*Hetwaras*, the Hattuarii, Attoarii (*Gesta Regum Francorum*) Chattuarii (Strabo) or Chatti (Tacitus, *Germania* 30) were a Franko-Frisian tribe who inhabited the region of the lower Rhine, round Cleves. (Leo, Müllenhoff). They took part with the Frisians and Franks in repelling Hygelac's historical invasion. 2363, 2916.

*Hildeburh*, a Dane, daughter of Hoc, sister of Hnaef and wife of King Finn. See under Finn and the Finn-episode. 1071, 1114.

*Hnaef*, a Dane (Dc), mentioned in *Widsith* (l. 29) and the *Fight at Finnsburg* (l. 40). He dies in fight with Finn. See the Finn-episode. 1069, 1114.

*Hoc*, (see *Widsith* 29) a Danish chief, and father of Hildeburh and Hnaef, mentioned in the Finn-episode. 1076.

*Hondscio*, a Geat. One of Beowulf's party in the expedition against Grendel. He was killed and eaten by Grendel (740 ff). 2076.

*Hreosnabeorh*, the scene of conflicts between the Swedes (under Onela and Ohthere) and the Geats. Probably somewhere near the border between Sweden and Geatland. 2477.

*Hrethel*, king of the Geats and maternal grandfather of Beowulf, (G 2). He died of grief after the death of his elder son Herebeald, who was shot by his own brother Haethcyn. 373, 454, 1485, 1923, 2430, 2470, 2925. The Geats are called Hrethlings at l. 2960.

*Hrethmen*, a name of the Danes, 445.

*Hrethric*, a Dane (D 10), son of Hrothgar. 1189, 1836.

*Hronesness* ("Whalesness"). A rocky promontory on the coast of Geatland, where Beowulf's barrow was constructed. Grein suggests that it was near Kongelf, on a little island surrounded by the northern arm of the Gota-Elf. 2805, 3137.

*Hrothgar* (*Widsith* 45), King of the Danes (Scylding dynasty, D. 6), during the time of Beowulf's expedition against Grendel. He built the hall Heorot, and is a prominent figure in the first part of the poem. He had a reputation for lavish generosity (1884—7, 2101—2, etc.), which was considered one of the highest of kingly virtues. An old man, he is inclined to be prosy and didactic (1722—1768—but some think this an interpolation) and is fond of relating his reminiscences (371—381, 459—479, 1709—1722). He seems to have been a man of gentle

mood and strong affection, emotional to a degree (1322—1344, 1397, 1870—1880). He is the Roe of Saxo Grammaticus (founder of Roskilde) and the Hroar of the Hrólfs Saga. 61 and often in Parts I and II.

*Hrothmund*, a Dane (D 11), younger son of Hrothgar. The name occurs in Florence's genealogy of the East Anglian Kings, and gives some colour to the supposition that his mother Wealhtheow was of the royal stock of East Anglia. 1189.

*Hrothulf*, a Dane (D 13?) nephew of Hrothgar and probably son of Halga; for Rolvo (= Hrothulf), is son of Helgo (= Halga), in Saxo Grammaticus. He seems to have been older than Hrothgar's sons, for Queen Wealhtheow expresses the hope that he will be their faithful guardian, in return for the kindness which had been showed him at the Danish court. Her expectation was apparently not fulfilled. He is the Rolf Krake of the Ynglinga Saga and is mentioned at line 45 of *Widsith*. 1017, 1181.

*Hrunting*, the name of the sword which Unferth lent to Beowulf, and which was used by him in his second adventure. 1457, 1490, 1659, 1807.

*Hugs*, the, = the *Chauci* of Tacitus (*Germania*, 35). A Frankish tribe who joined in repelling Hygelac's historical attack on the Frisian coast. 2502, 2914.

*Hunferth*, see Unferth.

*Hunlaf*. The son of Hunlaf is mentioned as one of Finn's warriors, who slew Hengest. 1143. See, however, the note on lines 1142—4.

*Hygd*, a Geatic princess (G 9), wife—possibly second wife—of Hygelac. Her character was good and gentle (1926—1931), and is contrasted with that of Thrytho. 2172, 2369.

*Hygelac*, King of the Geats (G 6) and uncle of Beowulf (= the Chocilaicus or Chochilagus of Gregory of Tours and the *Gesta Regum Francorum*). Ongentheow having defeated and slain his brother Haethcyn, Hygelac attacks Ongentheow and defeats him, and the latter is killed by one of Hygelac's men, Eofor (q. v.).

Subsequently Hygelac, who is still young on the return of Beowulf from Denmark, is married to Hygd. He dies not long after, on the occasion of his historical raid into Friesland between 512 and 520 A.D. (referred to at lines 1202 ff, 2354 ff, 2501 ff and 2914 ff) and is succeeded by

his young son Heardred, Beowulf having refused the throne, which was offered him by Hygelac's widow, Hygd. First mention line 1194, last 2988.

*Ingeld*, (*Widsith* 47), a prince of the Heathobards. See Freawaru, and the analysis of the Freawaru-episode in the translation. 2024, 2032.

*Ingwine*, (*Rune-poem*, 67—70), Ingaevones or friends of Ing, the first (mythic) king of the East Danes, "the divine root of the Ynglings as well as the Scyldings, of the Angles as well as of the Danes," SB.i, 106. 1044, 1319.

*Merovingian*, the = the Merovingian king of the Franks. See Introduction, p. xi. 2921.

*Naegling*, the name of the sword used by Beowulf in his fight with the dragon (line 2680). Stopford Brooke says (i, 76):—

"Naegling, which may mean Nailor, the sword which drives like a nail into the foe—or perhaps with jewelled nails in the hilt (Nagelring, in the *Wilkinsa Saga*, is the best sword in the world, and is a part of the ancient story of Angerboda)—breaks, the writer says, because the hand that swayed it was too strong for the sword. This is absurd, for Beowulf had fought with it all his life. But the intrusion of the detail here is done by some one who had heard of the legendary Offa and of his fight.

"The legend goes that Offa, getting ready for his island duel at Fifeldor in defence of his blind father Wermund, broke all the swords that were given him when he waved them in the air—so mighty was his strength. At last Wermund reminded him of a magic sword that long since he had hidden in the earth. So bitten with rust and worms and thin was Skrep, for that was the sword's name, that Offa feared to break it and forbore to fight with it in the battle. At last, angry, he raised it and struck, and Wermund was saved from despair by hearing the hiss with which Skrep cut his enemy in half from helm to thigh."

The absurdity of the sword snapping is not clear to me. Beowulf is fighting a monster—a preternaturally hard stroke is required, and it is too much for a sword which had been sufficient, when ordinary mortals were concerned.

*Offa*, king of the Angles (*Widsith* 35), son of Gar-mund or Wermund, see Genealogy (Angles), which shows the descent of the later Offa, king of Mercia, from the legendary and continental king of our poem. On the

connection of the two Offas, see A 45—50. See also under Naegling. 1949, 1957.

*Ohthere*, (the Ottar Vendilkraka of the Ynglinga Saga), a Swede (S 9), son of king Ongentheow, and younger brother of Onela, *q.v.* 2380, 2394, 2612, 2928, 2932.

*Onela*, a Swede (S 8), the Ali of the Ynglinga Saga, whom Athils (= Eadgils) kills in battle on the ice of Lake Wener (*cp.* line 2396). See Eadgils. 2616. 2932.

*Ongentheow*, (*Widsith* 31), king of the Swedes (S 7) and father of Onela and Ohthere. His wife's name is conjectured to have been Elan (l. 62, reading doubtful). Mentioned in connection with the feuds between the Geats and Swedes. In revenge for raids by Ongentheow's sons, Haethcyn, king of the Geats, invades Sweden and carries off Ongentheow's queen (Elan?). O. then invades Geatland, kills Haethcyn and recovers his wife; but Hygelac overcomes him at Ravenswood, where he is killed by Eofor. 2472—2489; 2910—2998.

*Oslaf*, a Dane, who is mentioned with Guthlaf as taking part in the fighting against King Finn. 1148.

*Ravenswood*, (*Hrefnawudu* or *Hrefnesholt* in original). The place near which Ongentheow slew Haethcyn, king of the Geats and was himself slain by Eofor. 2925, 2935.

*Scandia* (1686), *Scedelands* (19), Scedening, Scedeland in original. (*O. Norse* Skāni or Skāney). The southernmost part of Sweden, which belonged to the Danes at the time of our poem.

*Scyld*, (D 2), a notable Danish chief, after whom the Danes were called Scyldings. He was also an important legendary ancestor of the West Saxon line of kings. In our poem Scyld is represented as having been found, a helpless child, in a boat. He is called Scyld Scefing at l. 4 (see Note to this line) and this has generally been translated 'Scyld the son of Sceaf', in accordance with a genealogy given by Ethelweard (early tenth century). Both this writer and William of Malmesbury (middle of twelfth century) make Sceaf the foundling, and William of Malmesbury says he was so called from having a sheaf of wheat laying at his head, in the boat. We find, however, that in the AS Chronicle (Parker MS.) of AD. 855 Sceldwea (*i.e.* Scyld) is put down as the son of Heremod. Now Scyld is undoubtedly the same as Skjold (the Skyoldus of Saxo Grammaticus), and the father of this last (Lotherus in Saxo) has been clearly identified with



Heremod by Sievers, as we have already seen (art. 'Heremod'). The correct genealogy must therefore be taken to be as I have shown it in Table D, at the beginning of this Index, and Scaef must disappear as a historical personage. 4, 27.

*Scyldings*, the descendants of Scyld (see preceding article), used as a name for the whole of the Danish people. 30 etc.

*Scyflings*, the Swedish people, whose royal family were traced back to Scyfl (S 1). 63, 2381, 2603, 2927,

*Sigemund*, the Waelsing or Volsung (= son of Waels), and father and uncle of Fitela (see Fitela, and the episode of Sigemund, at ll. 874—915). In the *Völsunga Saga* and the *Nibelungenlied* it is Sigurd or Siegfried, the son of Sigemund, who kills the dragon, not Sigemund himself, as in *Beowulf*. It is probable that the *Beowulfine* version of the story is the earlier one. A 67—75.

*Sweden*, the land of the Swedes = the part of modern Sweden north of Lakes Wener and Wetter. The Swedish kings mentioned in the poem belong to the dynasty of the *Scyflings*. 2383 etc. See Genealogical Table S.

*Swerting*, a Geat (G 1), grandfather of Hygelac. 1203.

*Thrytho*, wife of the earlier Offa, king of the Angles. She is the subject of a short episode abruptly inserted into the poem, with the apparent object of contrasting her cruelty and vindictiveness with the gentleness of Hygelac's queen, Hygd. 1931—1962.

*Unferth*, a Dane, attached to the court of King Hrothgar as his orator. At the banquet before *Beowulf's* fight with Grendel, Unferth, excited with drink and eaten up with envy, forgets the laws of hospitality so far as to taunt *Beowulf* with having been beaten in a swimming match with Breca, and receives a crushing retort. He is said to have murdered his own brothers. Later in the poem he is on friendly terms with *Beowulf* and lends him the famous sword *Hrunting*. He is one of the most barbaric characters in the poem. 499, 530, 1165, 1807.

*Waegmundings*, the Swedish tribe to which *Beowulf* (on the father's side) and Wiglaf belong. It is possible that the head of the family may have occupied the position marked S 2 in the Genealogies. 2607, 2814.

*Waels*, the father of Sigemund. 877, 897.

*Wealhtheow*, the wife of king Hrothgar. She belonged to a family called the *Helmings* (see *Helmings*) and was

a type of the discreet 'peace-weaver' who was looked upon as the ideal queen of the times. She is courteous and hospitable, and makes good speeches. 612, 629, 664, 1162, 1188, 1215.

*Weders* or *Wed-r-Geat*, a name of the Geats.

*Weland*, also referred to at l. 1 of *Deor's Lament* and ll. 1, 2 and II, 9 of the *Walther Fragment* the smith of ancient legend, who gives his name (*O. N.* Völundr) to the Völundarkvitha of the Older Edda, and answers broadly to the Greek Hephaistos. Beowulf's coat of mail was a work of Weland. 455.

*Wendels*, (the Wenlas of *Widsith* 59?), probably the Vandals (S. Bugge, in PB. XII, 7, cp. ten Brink, *Beowulf-Untersuchungen* 203), although Möller (*Altengl. Volksepos*, p. 5) and Sarrazin (*Beowulf-Studien*, pp. 29, 43) consider them as a tribe inhabiting the northernmost part of Jutland. 348.

*Weohstan* (S 4), the father of Wiglaf. He killed Eanmund, the elder son of Ohthere, and stripped him of his armour. 2602, 2613, 2752, 2862, 2907.

*Wiglaf*, the son of Weohstan, was Beowulf's right-hand man in his fight with the fiery dragon, when Beowulf's other followers ran away. He was a relative—perhaps cousin (S 6)—of Beowulf; at any rate they were both Waegmundings,—and was intrusted by the childless hero with the execution of his last wishes, receiving also from him his armour and decorations.

He is a fine example of the young noble of the times; note especially his faithfulness and loyalty (2708—9, 2599—2601 2650—2), in an apparently hopeless situation, where there could be no motives for fighting except honour, and love of the chief. Observe also his impassioned denunciation of the cowardly followers, and the severe penalties with which he threatens them. For every true noble, says he, death is better than inglorious life! 2602, 2852, etc.

*Withergyld*, the name of a warrior of the Heathobards? See note to line 2051.

*Wonred* (G 13), a Geat, father of Eofor and Wulf. 2965, 2971.

*Wulf* (G 15), a Geat, son of Wonred, who took part in the fighting between Hygelac and Ongentheow. 2965, 2993.

*Wulfgar*, a chief of the Wendels, attached to Hrothgar's

court, who first receives Beowulf and his party on their arrival in Denmark, and presents them to Hrothgar. 348, 360, 390.

*Wylfings*, the tribe to which Heatholaf belonged, perhaps the same as the Ylfingar of the Scandinavian sagas (SZ 46), who inhabited East Geatland. Müllenhoff, however (*Untersuchungen*, 90), locates them on the southeastern shores of the Baltic. 461, 471.

*Wyrd*, like Latin *Fortuna*, means both 'fate' and 'fate personified'. In most of the passages in which the word occurs in Beowulf either sense will do equally well, but line 2527 seems to be an instance of the latter usage. In Scandinavian mythology Wyrd was one of the three principal Norns or Nornir, who, with the Valkyriur, were the weavers and disposers of the destinies of mankind. SB. i, 34, 35, 115.

*Yrmenlaf*, a Dane, Aeschere's younger brother. 1324.

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